The Amorites and the Bronze Age Near East

The Making of a Regional Identity

Aaron A. Burke

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In this book, Aaron A. Burke explores the evolution of Amorite identity in the Near East from ca. 2500 to 1500 BC. He sets the emergence of a collective identity for the Amorites, one of the most famous groups in ancient Near Eastern history, against the backdrop of both Akkadian imperial intervention and declining environmental conditions during this period. Tracing the migration of Amorite refugees from agropastoral communities into nearby regions, he shows how mercenarism in both Mesopotamia and Egypt played a central role in the acquisition of economic and political power between 2100 and 1900 BC. Burke also examines how the establishment of Amorite kingdoms throughout the Near East relied on traditional means of legitimation, and how trade, warfare, and the exchange of personnel contributed to the establishment of an Amorite koine. Offering a fresh approach to identity at different levels of social hierarchy over time and space, this volume contributes to broader questions related to identity for other ancient societies.

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For Richard E. Burke, whose passion for antiquity inspired this work.

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PREFACE

It was tempting to title this work a social history of the Amorites. This, however, would have been inaccurate, as I have made no attempt to provide a complete historical narrative of developments in the history of peoples who, at one time or another, identified as or were identified by others as Amorites. Furthermore, for reasons explained in the introduction, I have not sought to cover the Amorites in all periods, but rather to end the temporal scope of this study with what I regard to be the pinnacle in Amorite identity, what some have termed the "Amorite age." Thus, a complete history of the Amorites remains to be written. Nevertheless, it probably will never be written owing to the sheer scope of the endeavor, as evident in this work, and in this regard this work admittedly stretched my capabilities with the types of sources represented across the vast geographical and linguistic scope covered herein. Indeed, some will no doubt write off the endeavor for this very reason, though this would be a mistake, since if one does so, many other past phenomena would also be disregarded for the sheer lacunae in our data.

If anything has kept a social history of the Amorites in the ancient Near East from being written, it has been both the political boundaries of the modern world and the academic silos with which those of us in ancient Near Eastern studies are all too familiar. I have often asked myself why I have endeavored to attempt to write this book. The answer, I believe, is to be found in my training in Near Eastern studies that, while firmly rooted in Near Eastern archaeology, required intensive exposure to the languages and historical traditions of the ancient Near East from Egypt to Mesopotamia. In particular, I grew to love the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1500 BC) while at The Oriental Institute at The University of Chicago. I began to recognize it as the true roots of the Late Bronze Age, the ugly, imperialist stepchild of the Middle Bronze Age that is often identified as the "age of internationalism," and that has received, frankly, too much discussion, particularly in secondary literature. This is likely because its predecessor has simply been overlooked, owing to the challenge of stitching together the type of historical narrative that so easily fills the pages of secondary literature. Nevertheless, it is arguable that we actually have many more variegated sources from which to write histories of the Middle Bronze Age than we do for the Late Bronze Age, which is likely the reason many have

shied away from it. The Mari Letters alone are a formidable corpus, and more formidable still because of the threat posed to our intellectual assumptions by yet more unpublished documents from this corpus that remain to be studied.

Although I began my career with interests in biblical studies, and through this lens I first viewed much of the ancient Near Eastern tradition, like many in the field, my interests were only further piqued by study of the cultural traditions from Egypt to Iran. Since my earliest dealings with the archaeology of the Middle Bronze Age, I have been struck by the range of shared cultural expression across this vast region. Although many careers have been built stressing the "uniqueness" of particular Near Eastern traditions, less attention has been paid to the similarities or continuities that existed across the ancient Near East, which to me seem often to be veiled by little more than window dressings that stress the distinct character of one tradition over another. Indeed, the entire enterprise of ancient Near Eastern studies is rooted in the creation and defense of artifactual typologies, whether linguistic or material, and through these differences we justify the menagerie of specialties required to carry on our collective discipline. Nevertheless, synthesis requires standing in the gap and viewing the world from the spaces between our islands of understanding.

Since the early days of my study of Biblical Hebrew, I was curious exactly to what we referred when we spoke of the Proto-Semitic forms from which Hebrew descended. I was, of course, less interested in the linguistic details than a philologist would be, but I found myself primarily interested in the cultural context in which Proto-Semitic languages existed and in the precise linguistic traditions to which they pointed. Was this Proto-Semitic some form of Amorite or related to Amorite? (Was this akin to the difference between pure and applied mathematics?) What was clear, however, is that even if one trained in philology, the answer could not be adequately provided along purely philological lines, since, fundamentally, language is a cultural artifact, with varied expressions relating to time and place, most of the details of which remain beyond our ability to satisfactorily reconstruct. Consequently, our understandings of the broad cultural developments in which language is situated are fundamental to our reconstructions of the development of a particular linguistic tradition. For this reason, I was often struck by the veritable interchangeability of references to "Northwest Semitic," "Proto-Semitic," and "Amorite" linguistic traditions, for example, that might be employed in given discussions depending on the presuppositions, academic tradition, and degree of caution exercised by the scholar discussing it. Likewise, I often wondered why, after working through the range of options, scholars were not bolder in their conclusions. As I have learned, while this is in part a result of an appropriate caution, it has likely as much to do with the limits of familiarity that philologists have with archaeological and historical data, and vice versa.

Similarly, archaeology offers discrete datasets associated with regional trad-itions that did not exist in isolation. Egyptologists identify communities of Levantine "Asiatics" in the eastern Delta, and Levantine archaeologists refer to sites as inhabited by Amorites, while Mesopotamian archaeologists excavate the remains of Old Babylonian sites ruled by textually-identified Amorite dynasties. In other cases, even after sites are excavated, in the absence of textual evidence for the identities of the communities in question, archaeologists rarely seek to reconstruct the nuances of social affiliations of their research subjects from the data they possess. Certainly, it is rarely the case, when compared for example to the archaeology of Mari, that one can be sure of the identities of (i.e., labels for) a settlement's population. Nevertheless, if we regard that our best efforts to do so are, as they really are, merely the latest in a series of hypotheses, then we are freed to venture the comparisons that, in the end, should enable a refinement of our arguments. This then advances our understanding of how ancient populations were affiliated and how they may have identified. Obviously, our data is limited, but this can be no excuse for not trying, lest we be permanently hamstrung except in cases that seem otherwise straightforward. This, of course, raises the issue of whether any cases of identity in the ancient Near East are straightforward, and the answer to this is a resounding no.

There is certainly little that we can be unequivocally confident about in the ways in which we would like to be. This work does not offer, therefore, definitive conclusions concerning a social history of Amorites. Instead, it outlines a series of hypotheses about how Amorite identities were likely shaped by a broad set of circumstances and institutions, resulting from a range of factors situated in specific times and places, yet often partaking of cultural traditions that circulated more widely than we often acknowledge. In this regard, this study has exposed the need to reexamine overarching vectors such as trade, warfare, and migration that were responsible for the transmission of traditions. Although trade has received the most attention, historically its treatment in Near Eastern studies has often bordered on facile, with little consideration of the sorts typical to the field of anthropology, that require working beyond the limits of the sources to reconstruct the range of possible outcomes the data may embody. Warfare on the other hand, with all of its negative connotations, has not been adequately considered as a major vector of cultural exchange, as it most certainly was in the ancient Near East. Not only did armies move vast distances across the Near East during the Bronze Age for months at a time – with troops levied from across the landscapes of their kingdoms – their movements included coteries of non-combatants whose services were required for the operations of these armies. To this we can add the considerable displacements of populations caused by warfare, ranging from prisoners of war and enslavement, to refugees and deportees. Warfare, as in

modern times, mobilized a chain of human dominoes. As discussed in this work, it also created new environments in which professional warriors and mercenaries emerged as major social actors. Migration, which is often underestimated or dismissed under the guise of early twentieth century concerns with "hordes and invaders," also played a significant role in the shaping of cultural exchanges. While mass migrations were certainly rare phenomena, considerations of ecological and environmental change open our eyes to its long-term effects. Perhaps more significantly we will recognize that many migrations were actually localized phenomena, as populations shifted their allegiances and affiliations, or may have sought protection within the boundaries of a neighboring state. Migration therefore sometimes constituted a form of resistance by relocation, but it often did not involve the great distances attributed to invading hordes blown in from the steppe.

These forms of mobility thus embody timeless phenomena by which cultural memory and traditions have been formed. This, then, is the contribution that I hope that this work can offer in furthering discussions of the mechanics by which trade, warfare, and migration impacted the shaping of cultures in the ancient world. Fundamentally, the archaeological signatures with which we are familiar were the product of social interactions that are all too often veiled in our sources. While archaeology and textual sources may not permit the writing of a historical narrative in the sense of most histories, like pegs on a board, they do provide the framework within which most other subjects must be considered. It is my hope therefore that exploration of the Bronze Age will proceed more boldly to consider issues surrounding the social and economic identities of Near Eastern communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was nearly a decade in the making since it was first conceived and therefore owes a great deal to interactions with colleagues in North America, Europe, and Israel. Their suggestions and critiques have been engaged with in various ways throughout this work, and each has left their indelible imprint on the direction of this project. I have done my best to keep track of these discussions over the years, and therefore must apologize if I have left anyone out in these acknowledgments.

The Borderlands seminar organized at the University of California, Santa Barbara played an instrumental role in the early shape of this work in 2011. I would like to express my gratitude, in particular, to Stuart T. Smith, Elizabeth Digeser, and John Lee for including me in this seminar. A substantial portion of the research for this book was undertaken during a sabbatical at Johns Hopkins University during the 2012–2013 academic year. I am grateful for numerous stimulating conversations with faculty and students of the Near Eastern Studies Department. I would like to thank the department chair at the time, Theodore Lewis, as well as the current chair, Glenn Schwartz, for their support during my residence, and the many other colleagues with whom I enjoyed numerous discussions on a wide variety of related subjects: Jacob Lauinger, Paul Delnero, Michael Harrower, Emily Anderson, and Mellon fellow, James Osborne. The opportunity to return, if virtually, to present in a department graduate seminar in Fall 2018 led by Jacob Lauinger pressed me further to consider the issues addressed here, and I thank him in kind for his participation in a Middle Bronze Age seminar on the issue of land tenure in early 2019. In April 2013, I was also fortunate to attend the *ARAM* Seminar on Amorites in Oxford, where I had the benefit of stimulating exchanges on the question of an Amorite koine with Daniele Bodi, Minna Lönnqvist Silver, and others. In May 2013, Peter Machinist kindly hosted a seminar at Harvard University in which I also presented some of the early thinking behind this work. I thank students of that seminar for their engagement on the subject.

Parts of this work were also presented at the eleventh annual Oriental Institute Seminar organized by Felix Höflmayer at The University of Chicago in February 2014. Later that year, I presented a portion of this research

ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	*Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*
ÄAT	*Ägypten und Altes Testament*
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary,* 6 vols. D. N. Freedman, ed. New York: Doubleday.
AEL 1	*Ancient Egyptian Literature 1: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. M. Lichtheim. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
Akk.	Akkadian
ANES	*Ancient Near Eastern Studies*
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
Ar.	Arabic
ARE	*Ancient Records of Egypt*. J. Breasted. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906.
ARM	Archives royales de Mari. Paris.
ÄuL	*Ägypten und Levante*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BM	Bibliotheca Mesopotamica
CAD	The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. A. L. Oppenheim and E. Reiner, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965–2011.
CAJ	*Cambridge Archaeological Journal*
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, 4 vols. J. M. Sasson, ed. London: Simon & Schuster, 1995.
CKU	*Correspondence of the Kings of Ur*
COS 1	*The Context of Scripture 1: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*. W. W. Hallo, ed. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
COS 3	*The Context of Scripture 3: Archival Documents from the Biblical World*. W. W. Hallo, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
COS 4	*The Context of Scripture 4: Supplements*. K. L. Younger, Jr, ed. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
CRAIBL	*Comptes rendus de l'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
CUSAS	Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology

DDD	*Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible.* K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst, eds., 2nd rev. ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
DM	*Damaszener Mitteilungen*
EBA	Early Bronze Age
EI	*Eretz-Israel*
FIP	First Intermediate Period
ha	hectare
IOS	*Israel Oriental Studies*
JANER	*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JAR	*Journal of Archaeological Research*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*
JAS	*Journal of Archaeological Science*
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
JHS	*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*
JMA	*Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JSSEA	*Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities*
Kt *or* KT	Old Assyrian text from Kanesh Kültepe
LAPO	*Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient.* F. Daumas, ed. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967–.
LBA	Late Bronze Age
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land,* 5 vols. E. Stern, ed. Jerusalem: Simon & Schuster, 1993–2008.
MBA	Middle Bronze Age
MK	Middle Kingdom
MDOG	*Mitteilungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*
OA	Old Assyrian
OB	Old Baylonian
OEAE	*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt,* 4 vols. D. B. Redford, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
OEANE	*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East,* 4 vols. E. M. Meyers, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
OHAL	*The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant (c. 8000–332 BCE).* M. L. Steiner and A. E. Killebrew, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
OJA	*Oxford Journal of Archaeology*
OK	Old Kingdom
OLA	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*
Or	*Orientalia*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
PNAS	*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*
RA	*Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie orientale*
RIMA	*Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods.* A. K. Grayson, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

RIME 1	*Presargonic Period: (2700–2350 BC). Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Vol. 1.* D. Frayne, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
RIME 2	*Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods, Vol. 2.* D. Frayne, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
RIME 3/1	*Gudea and His Dynasty. The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Vol. 3/1.* E. Otto, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
RIME 3/2	*Ur III Period (2112–2004 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods, Vol. 3/2.* D. Frayne, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
RIME 4	*Old Babylonian Period (2003–1595 BC). The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods, 4.* G. Frayne, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
SAHL	Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
Sum.	Sumerian
TA	*Tel Aviv*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Wb	*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 vols. A. Erman and H. Grapow, eds. Leipzig: Akademie-Verlag, 1926–1963.
Wb Beleg.	*Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache. Die Belegstellen*, 5 vols. A. Erman and H. Grapow, eds. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, repr. 1973, 1935–1953.
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie*

INTRODUCTION

Amorites, Their Legacy, and the Study of Identity

During the eighteenth century BC, a fraternity of Amorite kings held sway over a vast expanse of the Fertile Crescent, from Babylon to the southern stretches of Canaan. Where records permit, the founders of dynasties from Babylon to Mari, Assyria, Yamḫad, Qatna, Byblos, and Hazor laid claim by different means to a collective social identity as Amorites. By 1665 BC, Asiatic "foreign rulers" of Levantine origins and bearing linguistically Amorite names, who are identified as the Hyksos, established themselves in the eastern Nile Delta, likely by means of a coup against local Egyptian rule. Thus, between the establishment of the earliest principalities ruled by Amorites at the end of the twentieth century BC and the fall of Babylon in 1595 BC, Amorite rulers held power in many centers from the Nile Delta to the Persian Gulf. Their legacy is largely identified with its elites, especially its rulers, who fostered a cultural renaissance in which robust legal and literary traditions, building programs, and warfare were products of an age of intense competition and emulation. It has come down to us in many ways, not the least of which are legal traditions that were codified under Amorite regimes. The most famous of these are the Laws of Hammurapi, which are echoed in biblical legal traditions.[1] Other elements of this legacy are less transparent but

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[1] For example, Westbrook 1985; also Wright 2009.

were propagated through the cultural traditions of later groups such as Assyrians and Israelites well into the Iron Age.

A clear consensus regarding Amorites as an identity or cultural phenomenon in Near Eastern history has not been reached, however. Varied memories of the Amorites in different parts of the ancient Near East and distributed among textual sources spanning approximately two millennia have confounded efforts to understand what Amorite identity signified at different moments in antiquity. Twentieth-century scholarship largely viewed the Amorites as an invading group representing the conquest of the "desert over the sown," while more recent efforts have characterized the Amorites as a social phenomenon but without a clear articulation of its meaning. More recent discussions have thrown into question not only the general enterprise of exploring ancient identities[2] but also specifically that of the Amorites.[3] So we might ask: What is the aim of studying Amorites, or any similarly labeled group for that matter?

There is certainly a tension in the twenty-first century concerning identity and its construction. On the one hand, great emphasis is placed on fundamental aspects of the diversity of individual communities, and in this school of thought all identities merit attention and none should be elevated above another. On the other hand, identities, understood as cultural constructs, are mutable and not exclusive, meaning that an individual's or group's identity exists in relationship to one or more individuals or groups simultaneously, and they are negotiated in different contexts, as circumstances warrant over time. It is clear, however, that no single approach, whether historical, linguistic, or archaeological, can seek to adequately address these issues in ancient societies and that a holistic and diachronic approach is required. Historical and philological studies have nearly exhausted what can be said concerning Amorite identity from the sources we possess, yet it remains the case that archaeology has only haphazardly addressed the subject, usually relying on historical studies as their point of departure, often testing these hypotheses but usually in a manner that either reifies or dispenses with them. If a middle ground exists, it has not been adequately articulated. While this should hardly be surprising given the challenge of constructing identity from archaeological remains, archaeology's chief contribution is very likely its ability to interrogate identity in antiquity, whether we are speaking of ethnicity or variously constructed social identities.[4]

Lacking among existing approaches to the study of Amorites and Amorite identity are both a pan–Near Eastern perspective and one that is concerned with the *longue durée*, which are now warranted in the light of advances in the

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[2] Quinn 2017; Martin 2017.
[3] See Homsher and Cradic 2018.
[4] Insoll 2007.

study of identity and social interaction in antiquity. The question is not whether Amorite identities between 2500 and 1500 BC were one and the same, since they could not possibly be. Rather, the inquiry centers on how Amorite identities developed over this long span of time and how these developing identities might have related to one another, and ultimately what an understanding of Amorite identity in each major period of its development contributes to the study of the ancient Near East. As the scope of this work suggests, Amorite identity, in and of itself, merits such study for the very reason that its study in particular, among a very select few identity groups in the ancient Near East, has raised such issues since early in the twentieth century AD. Furthermore, the processes relating to the construction and maintenance of identities raised by the study of such an enduring identity, albeit changed through time and space, reveals a great deal about the range of factors, processes, and cultural institutions that shape identity and likely have applications to the development of other enduring identities, particularly among Old World sources, such as Greek, Phoenician, and Egyptian identities, to name a few.

AN AMORITE LEGACY

A frequent starting point for the study of identity in the ancient Near East, often under the ethnicity label, is the question of the particular group's legacy. By this I mean the widely regarded cultural contributions of a particular group, if such were necessary to warrant their study. Such is the case, for example, for groups such as the Israelites and Greeks, and for larger cultural configurations like Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, but also more recently for groups like the Philistines and Phoenicians. But why should we care, and why should we endeavor to address the history and cultural contributions of a particular group, as offered to us by ancient sources, skewed as they often are by the idiosyncrasies of their contexts? In the case of the Amorites, we are drawn to consider Amorite identity, on one hand, because of the sheer temporal scope across which references to Amorites are found among ancient sources, which almost serves as an empirical measure of the extent of their influence.[5] On the other hand, the historical and cultural achievements of notable figures who claimed Amorite identity, like Hammurapi of Babylon and Shamshi–Adad of Assyria during the Old Babylonian (OB) Period, expose the contributions of Amorite cultures to a global cultural heritage, not merely restricted to Western Civilization. Similarly, perhaps we are also drawn to this inquiry because many Mesopotamian sources appear to have been consumed with portrayals of

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[5] For overviews, see Liverani 1973; Whiting 1995; Fleming 2016.

Amorites as the "other" threatening Near Eastern civilization at the end of the third millennium BC, which forces us to reconcile very different characterizations.

Intriguing, if mixed, characterizations of the Amorites first appear among more familiar sources, like the Hebrew Bible, through which Near Eastern and biblical scholars were introduced to the Amorites, long before their identification in cuneiform sources. For this reason, despite being nearly a millennium later than the appearance of the last Amorite dynasty, they have invariably colored earlier discussions of Amorites. In total, the terms "Amorite" and "Amorites" occur eighty-eight times in the Hebrew Bible. Yet three biblical verses may suffice to expose Judah's pervasive interest in its relationship to its neighbors past and present, among whom the Amorites evidently held a significant place.

In the Bible, Amorites are first identified within the so-called Table of Nations in Genesis 10.

> Canaan sired Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites (*'emoñm*), the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.
>
> *Genesis 10:15–18*

When the Hebrew Bible began to assume its present shape in the late seventh century BC, Judah was acutely aware of its place as a nation among many thanks in large part to the expansion of the Assyrian Empire. It was compelled therefore to articulate its relationship to the peoples of the world around it. The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 provided just that, a cultural geography, the principal aim of which was to frame Judah's place within a Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean political landscape – Judah's cosmos. It did so not only by reference to extant states but also by means of eponymous ancestors who represented groups that were reckoned to have played a role in greater Israel's prehistory. Among these were, of course, the Amorites. (Similar though perhaps better-known processes were contemporaneously underway among the Greeks as well.[6])

Because the Amorites were identified among Canaan's traditional inhabitants, they were also among those peoples that Israel defeated to take the "Promised Land," as the prophet Amos reminded Israel already in the eighth century BC.

> Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them,
> who were tall like high cedars, and strong as oaks;
> I destroyed his fruit above,
> and his roots below.
>
> *Amos 2:9*

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[6] See Hesiod's *Theogony*.

More than a century later the prophet Ezekiel went even further, characterizing the legacy of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, as the result of a union between Amorite and Hittite ancestors, seemingly resurrecting, as it were, the role of Israel's traditional, though now ancient, enemies.

> Thus says the Lord God [lit. *Yahweh*] to Jerusalem:
> "Your origin and your birth are in the land of the Canaanites;
> your father was the Amorite and your mother a Hittite."
>
> *Ezekiel 16:3*

While the Table of Nations, written as it was during the late Iron Age, permits neither a reconstruction of Bronze Age history nor a study of Amorite identity, this reference to the Amorites taken together with other biblical references to Mamre the Amorite, an ally of Abraham in Genesis (14:13), and references to later battles with the Amorite king Sihon reveal the complexity of bringing together the region's cultural memories into a single tradition.

From roughly the same period, at the Assyrian capitals of Nineveh and Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad), copies of the so-called Assyrian King List (AKL) reveal an analogous interest to invoke an Amorite legacy. However, while the Amorites were again remembered, here they are grafted into the genealogy of Assyrian kings.[7] This list opens with seventeen eponymous ancestors, several of which are the names of well-known Amorite tribes in the early second millennium.

> Tudiya, Adamu, Yangi, Suhlamu, Harharu, Mandaru, Imsu, Harsu, Didanu, Hanu, Zuabu, Nuabu,ı Abazu, Belu, Azarah, Ushpia, Apiashal.
>   TOTAL: 17 kings who lived in tents.[8]

This text has been identified as considerably older than the Neo-Assyrian Period, and it may serve therefore as an important record of Assyrian cultural memory with respect to its relationship to an Amorite past.

A more ambiguous characterization of Amorites is also to be found in Neo-Assyrian times among a collection of Assyrian proverbs, copies of which come from the library of Ashurbanipal (ca. 630 BC).[9] Here the opening lines of what may have been a conversation between an Amorite and his wife read as follows: "[A low] fellow/[An A]morite speaks [to] his wife, 'You be the man, [I] will be the woman.'"[10] Consequently, in whatever esteem former Amorite rulers were held during the late Iron Age, mixed characterizations persisted and the context of biblical references therefore can be more clearly understood.

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[7] Millard 1997; Yamada 1994: 12.
[8] Millard 1997: 463.
[9] Lambert 1960: 225.
[10] Ibid., 230.

Perhaps because of the evidence for an Iron Age cultural memory of Amorites, Abraham, the Jewish patriarch in Genesis, is the most likely reason for the position Amorites held in Near Eastern studies, particularly biblical studies.[11] This is not, however, because Abram/Abraham was ever identified explicitly with the label Amorite. Rather, this interpretation was in large part bolstered by the assumption that the late third and early second millennia constituted a fitting chronological setting for the patriarchal narratives of Genesis, during which time Amorites were replete in Mesopotamian sources. Efforts to demonstrate plausible linguistic comparisons between patriarchal names and Amorite names seemingly lent still further support to this reconstruction.[12]

Abram's journey from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran and then to Canaan, was further seen as a cultural memory of Amorite population movements, at least as they were envisioned in the mid-twentieth century AD. Yet despite attempts to identify Abraham as an Amorite,[13] the closest the biblical texts comes to such an suggestion is a statement in Deuteronomy 26:5: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number and there became a great nation, mighty and populous." While it mentions neither Abraham nor the Amorites by name, some have maintained that this reference to Arameans is to be read as a corruption of Amorite, and thereby the reference to Abraham's descendants as "wandering Arameans" was intended to identify them as Amorites.[14] Further identifications of early Aramean groups, such as the Ahlammu-Arameans, as also Amorite have only further convinced some of the merits of this position, be they tenuous.[15] Nevertheless, approaching this literature as cultural memory, with its intensely etiological concerns, moves the discussion of this tradition away from seeking its validation as historically plausible to recognizing its important place in ancient Israel's cultural memory.[16]

As both biblical and historical sources illustrate, it seems that an Amorite legacy or cultural memory influenced later traditions, and quite significantly early biblical traditions. Similar associations of Amorites to a wide range of customs and practices have been voiced in more recent scholarship on a range of subjects, from pastoralism to kinship, donkey riding, sacrificial customs,

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[11] The earliest such research was pioneered in W. F. Albright 1961. For a review of the question of the identification of the biblical patriarchs with Amorites and attempts to historically situate these traditions, see McCarter 2011, but also critical discussions by Thompson 1974 and Dever 1977.

[12] Knudsen 1999. See also chapter 2 in Thompson 1974.

[13] See Hendel 2005.

[14] Millard 1980.

[15] For a review of the evidence, see Younger 2007: 133–37.

[16] Hendel 2010, but also Hendel 2005.

burial practices, and temple architecture, among others. But who were the Amorites and how was Israel's cultural legacy perceived that they should still be mentioned in texts nearly a millennium after their OB heyday? And, more generally, is there any basis for seeking to address references to Amorites through time? Were such references the product of a meaningful relationship between terms early and late, and how can such a relationship be articulated?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

In this book, which is born of more than twenty years of thought and research on the Amorites and the Middle Bronze Age (MBA), and inspired by observations like those previously mentioned, I contend that recent historical, literary, and archaeological studies make it possible to articulate a meaningful social and cultural history of the Amorites and the negotiation of their identity from the mid-third through the mid-second millennium BC. In this work I have, of necessity, drawn upon my training in Near Eastern and Egyptian archaeology, Assyriology, and anthropology, and I consider that it is this training that has stoked the ambitions of this study. This research has led me to observe that, for a discipline as geographically and temporally expansive as Near Eastern studies, analogous and contemporaneous circumstances are often overlooked by specialists associated with the study of one region, particularly when their focus is situated at one end of this geographic expanse. Yet in antiquity borders that limited the movement of people were almost nonexistent, unlike the obstructed national borders that define states today. As this study reveals, a wide range of factors contributed to a greater degree of mobility and exchange before the mid-second millennium than is often recognized in scholarly literature. My specialty in Bronze and Iron Age Levantine archaeology has required that I continually juggle attempts to maintain some degree of familiarity with cultural developments in Egypt, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the eastern Mediterranean, and many of the observations in this work are a direct result of this effort. The greatest impediments to a study like this are, however, the great variety of data, which can be broken into three major components: textual sources such as literature and inscriptions, archaeological data consisting of a range of excavation, iconographic, and survey data, and theoretical approaches, particularly as they concern approaches to cultural exchange and identity negotiation. Each of these areas are integrated in the historical progression of my argument, which form the basis of the chapters in this work. A few preliminary words regarding the main elements of my approach are necessary so as to avoid distractions that might result during exploration of such a complex subject.

Studies of identity during the past two decades, during which concepts such as the negotiation of identity have been increasingly incorporated into archaeological studies, have been particularly significant in shaping the thinking

behind the present work.[17] Concepts derived from such studies, but also including my own research on refugees,[18] I hope distinguishes it from earlier examinations of this subject. I do not embrace an approach that seeks to qualify Amorite identity in strict terms as an ethnicity – at least not in most periods where the term occurs – and for some time now this has been untenable.[19] Rather, despite but also perhaps because of its nebulous character and multiple registers of meaning, I instead employ the term "identity" throughout this work. As the basis for understanding the negotiation of identity through time and during different circumstances, identity can be further qualified in moments where, for example, Amorite identity was elevated – in certain contexts – by means of its association with with the rise of Amorite dynasties, or demoted when associated with unwanted social elements. Thus, shifting constituencies and changes in our sources mean that in one moment references to Amorites may conform to traditionally accepted definitions of ethnicity, while in others (and more frequently this is the case) it can be understood as a social identity in which benefits were accrued through association with a broader social collective.

Because this work covers such a lengthy period of time it is most useful to invoke relevant theoretical frameworks as evidence from these contexts warrants, rather than cloud their explanatory value by attempting to define and defend these choices at the outset of this study, outside of the historical settings that permit their description. That said, the reader will find that in the context of defining diachronic negotiations of Amorite identity, I have drawn on a range of mostly familiar approaches, including migration and refugee studies, koinezation,[20] peer polity interactions,[21] monumentality,[22] entanglement,[23] cultural memory,[24] communities of practice,[25] and still others. I have, however, avoided major digressions on these subjects, assuming that their application is now sufficiently familiar to allow me to avoid a lengthy defense of their employment. This diversity of theoretical approaches is the result of the fact that Amorites in antiquity are a moving target for scholarly investigation, and no singular approach could ever hope to qualify the adaptations and

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[17] Notable examples include Goody 1982; Shehan 1989; Emberling 1997; Hall 1997; Costin 1998; Wenger 1998; Hall 2002; Díaz-Andreu, Lucy, Babić, et al. 2005; Twiss 2007; Yoffee 2007; Roymans and Derks 2009; Pohl and Mehofer 2010; Steadman and Ross 2010; Gruen 2011; Demetriou 2012.
[18] Burke 2011a; Burke 2012; Burke 2017.
[19] See Kamp and Yoffee 1980: 97.
[20] Kerswill 2008.
[21] Renfrew 1986.
[22] Osborne 2014a.
[23] Dietler 2010.
[24] Jonker 1995; Connerton 1989.
[25] Wenger 1998.

developments witnessed among Amorite communities across the Near East over the course of more than a millennium.

Such concepts have prodded me to grapple with the circumstances that faced different Amorites communities during the Bronze Age, in an attempt to understand how these communities may have related to one another and how they negotiated their unique circumstances. The notion of community, which has come into vogue as a means of bounding and defining groups in antiquity,[26] has likewise played a significant role in this effort by providing an alternative to the tribal identifications on which most Amorite studies have fixated. This is not to say that tribes, and their smaller subdivisions, clans, are not significant units for observing the negotiation of identity among Amorite communities. They certainly are. However, the historical plight of many Amorite groups suggests that tribes were merely the largest collective that can be ascribed an Amorite identity – confederacies of tribes not withstanding – and not necessarily the most significant unit for understanding the wide range of responses to different social, economic, and political circumstances by individual Amorite communities. Indeed, it is less common, outside of the Mari texts, that the tribal affiliation of individual Amorites are made explicit, and so when we do encounter these individuals at what level of social organization are we to consider them collectively? To invoke the language of community is to suggest that kinship affiliation, as tribal terminology underscores, is but one fairly restricted way of conceptualizing Amorite social affiliation. Insofar as I occasionally refer to Amorite states, I do so assuming that the state's ruling elites, and not necessarily its full constituency, are the basis for such an ascription, recognizing full well the distinction, as will be made clear. For such states, when sources permit, I attempt to demonstrate how Amorite communities might be identified, usually through material culture, as a significant, albeit not exclusive, source.

Another critical element of my effort is the recognition of the varied trajectories of Amorite communities that are possible within the broader scope of a collective Amorite identity – what might be identified as a supra-tribal social identity. Indeed, individual Amorite communities can be associated with entire settlements, such as towns or cities, but also with quarters or economic enclaves. Just as Amorites can be identified across a wide geographic extent of Mesopotamia already during the mid-third millennium, the increasing appearance of Amorite groups and individuals in the centuries to follow in still wider regions demands reflection upon the mechanisms of these dispersions, but also of the mechanisms that functioned to maintain the identity of these groups, and the contacts and bonds between them. This might explain, for instance,

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[26] Kolb and Snead 1997. For specific examples, see Mac Sweeney 2011; Porter 2013; and Feldman 2014.

how diaspora communities shared a broader Amorite identity and what this fundamentally meant.

Hand in hand with the issue of the appropriate identification of Amorite social structures is the question of their occupation and subsistence. Historically, Amorite studies have also been transfixed by pastoralist qualifications of Amorites, which have shaded their social, political, and economic characterization.[27] More than fifty years of such studies since the 1960s have certainly offered an understanding of the important role that pastoralists, generally, and Amorites, specifically, played in Near Eastern society. However, as I hope is evident in this work, Amorites engaged a wide range of occupations, a number of which were particularly significant to their social and political elevation, in ways that cannot be explained through a nearly exclusive emphasis on pastoralism. More recent qualifications of settlements and communities as agropastoral, because they engaged in agriculture and pastoralism for their subsistence, have not significantly altered the emphasis placed on pastoralism or for that matter nomadism, in connection with Amorite identity.[28] Mine, therefore, constitutes a considerable departure from most of the earlier studies, even as it relies on a range of extant observations, principally by Sumerologists and Assyriologists who have engaged the texts in question. Even so, there remains a place for pastoralism within the identity and cultural memory of Amorite groups, as discussed in Chapter 2.

While breaking with the pastoralist economic and tribal social orientations of earlier scholarship on the Amorites, I have not endeavored in this work to provide anything resembling a history of scholarship on the subject of the Amorites, as such enterprises are one of the great pitfalls of studies like this, derailing a wholesale reconsideration (if this is possible) of such well-trodden territory. Although reviews of scholarship are common in area and historical studies, there is a need to break free of the shackles that often needlessly constrain research by excessive digressions to sacrifice at the altar of old paradigms and tired ideas. I am not interested in a Talmudic treatise on what previous scholarship has claimed, and for this reason my footnotes are almost exclusively dedicated to citations of data and bibliography that is particularly germane to my arguments. Naturally, a massive bibliography has been consulted and assembled as part of this larger argument, and I hope that through this work these studies and others like them will be given greater consideration both in future research on the Amorites but also for similar contexts in which the negotiation of identity is of central relevance to identity in the *longue durée*.

In the process of describing the historical contexts in which Amorite identities were negotiated, I make occasional allusions to other, hopefully

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[27] See Porter 2012.
[28] As, for example, in Lönnqvist 2008b; Lönnqvist 2009; Lönnqvist 2010.

more familiar historical phenomena, sometimes outside Near Eastern history, which I hope expose the results of broader social processes. Among these are the Renaissance, Mediterranean exchange in the Iron Age, climate change, and modern refugee crises. My goal here is not a one-to-one comparison with these phenomena, but by analogy to potentially fill in the blanks in our considerations of past processes that are not explicit among ancient textual or archaeological sources.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

Concerning the scope of this work, I have endeavored to assess as many of the phenomena as possible that are central to understanding the evolution of Amorite identity among individuals, groups, and states between ca. 2500 and 1500 BC. As such, my approach is in the truest sense and out of necessity Braudelian, with considerations of the impact not only of political events associated with, for example, the reigns of individual kings, but also of long-term processes such as environmental change.[29] Nevertheless, I have sought to be comprehensive, not exhaustive. By considering a spectrum of diverse geographic, social, and cultural contexts in which Amorites have been identified, my intention is to identify broad frameworks that may assist our historical inquiries into Amorites as social actors. In difference to monolithic explanations of the past, my goal is to understand the diverse mechanisms behind how Amorites are identified, for example, at point A in moment X, and then at point B, but also at points C, D, and E in the next discernible historical moment, Y. I have endeavored to consider carefully both the spatial and temporal elements of my arguments, which are principally constrained by the limits of individual fields rather than any deliberate omission of certain types of data. I address, therefore, historical, archaeological, and linguistic data in what I hope is broadly a historical study, informed still further by anthropological approaches to understanding social interaction.

Among my goals is to understand the earliest moments in which Amorite identity surfaces. While some refer to such moments as "ethnogenesis," I do not favor the term since it seems to me, on the one hand, to imply a single moment in time after which an identity was established, and on the other, to presume an early awareness of an identity that depends on labels preserved in sources that are not native to the group in question and often may date to a much later period. It is noteworthy that the labels adopted in such an approach are fundamentally ethnic, usually are applied from the outside, and often do not at all reflect native terms of identification, which were usually just tribal

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[29] Braudel 1972.

designations – later read as part of an Amorite collective. They do not necessarily reveal native perceptions of their own identification and therefore require the conjuring of precursor groups to whom all too often scholars have appended the prefix "proto" to denote that the group is not yet fully formed (e.g., proto-Israelites, proto-Canaanites). Such language needlessly creates confusion and ignores that diachronic changes in the constituencies of a group are inherently part of the study of that group and normative among all societies. For this reason I have not adopted differentiated spellings of the term Amorite (*Amorrite*, *Amurrite*, etc.), as some scholars have in an attempt to differentiate Amorite groups regionally or diachronically or, likewise, to divorce the identity of Mari's Amorites, for instance, from later references to Amorites in the Hebrew Bible.[30] The use of different terms undermine the recognition of the potential connections that the appropriation of a label may have been intended to create, as I contend that this term effected, especially during the OB Period, as a social identity (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Despite social divisions and dissension within Amorite groups, the identification by a specific name through time, but especially during the same historical moment, is profoundly significant. One could make comparisons to the point in Greek history when appeals to unity among Greek city-states were made on the basis of collective identification as Greeks, which very interestingly was fostered principally by outside pressure, namely the Achaemenid Empire.[31] Certainly the adoption of distinct spellings of "Amorite" seeks to inject nuance into Amorite identities, by imposing distinctions on the ancient terms we possess, even if they are driven by the recognition that Mari's Amorites, for example, were not always composed of the same groups of Amorites that appear in Babylon, Larsa, Qatna, or Hazor. Unfortunately, they also decouple a basis for social cohesion as arguably some groups may have intended in their adoption of these terms in antiquity. Furthermore, we already possess a basis for subdividing Amorite identity, namely that they belonged to individual tribes, the names of many of which we have. I assume that in light of developments in archaeology over more than twenty years, at least most archaeologists can accept the premise of the existence of local cultural facies within a broader shared identity such as Amorites in the Near East, as is now evident for other groups that might still bear a single moniker (e.g., Greeks, Israelites, Philistines, Phoenicians). It remains the case, however, that for most of these groups, outside of their broader tribal affiliations, which were also often wedded to particular settlements, individuals often identified themselves by means of their association with a town or city-state.

[30] See Fleming 2004: 13–14.
[31] Hall 1997.

In tandem with embracing a *longue durée* perspective, I recognize that there are distinct historical moments that vastly accelerated both the movement of individuals and the progression of cultural change in antiquity, and no less so over the course of the millennium under study here. The structure of this study is the result of the identification of such discrete events within the broader periods or phases during which a host of factors and social processes contributed to the cultivation, efflorescence, and maintenance of a shared Amorite identity. Stages within the framework adopted here are lengthy, often lasting hundreds of years and they expose, I suggest, the glacial pace at which incremental cultural and social change can often occur. Behind these changes are long-term processes such as environmental change and broader cultural developments in which Amorite communities participated (see, especially, Chapters 2 and 3). These are invoked, though space has not permitted an exhaustive discussion or recapitulation of many issues that may be relevant to the developments identified. The question of the actual impact of climate change on the so-called Amoritization process (a term I do not embrace), for example, remains an open one, though I have sought a middle ground between the extremes in the interpretation of its full impact (see Chapter 2). More recent circumstances, rather surprisingly in the same region of Syria, may serve as illustrative of the impact of relatively limited declines in agricultural fortunes, which coupled with other factors, can lead to significant political and cultural change. Nevertheless, the debate will continue, as it should.

There are also serendipitous and specific moments in this social history that shaped the experience of Amorite communities, Braudel's *histoire événementielle*. Among the more notable are wars, building programs, and other political and economic endeavors that brought with them unique opportunities for social, economic, and political advancement (see Chapters 3 and 4). Careful attention to the wide latitude of experiences within different Amorite communities reveals the social complexity of their world that very much resembles ours today. Thus, this study is fraught with the tension that different individuals who identified as Amorites found themselves on both sides of the fence, so to speak, and I have not sought to oversimplify these circumstances. Rather, I have endeavored to reconstruct how such conditions could have come about, and thanks to anthropological and historical studies, and recent events, I have sought to illustrate how certain developments fed into the social changes at work among Amorite communities and their neighbors.

What follows is a historical archaeology of negotiations within a broader Amorite identity from southern Mesopotamia to the Delta of Egypt from the mid-third through the mid-second millennium BC. This diachronic history of the Amorites begins in Chapter 2 with the consideration of the earliest references to Amorites, which localize them across a broad arc of upper Mesopotamia. I suggest that Amorite identity emerges within this region from

the collective, agropastoral experience shared by the inhabitants of these settlements particularly from ca. 2500 to 2200 BC. These settlements were likely originally inabited by groups from nearby polities, such as Ebla and Mari, which were situated in more humid zones. These polities sought to exploit the limits of arable land in the so-called zone of uncertainty, for sustainable, rainfed agropastoralism. The original inhabitants of these settlements were comprised of varied constituencies from polities situated in adjacent, but less marginal zones. Yet over hundreds of years these frontier communities developed shared sets of practices, customs, and traditions that created a distinct identity among these communities, one that more closely bound them to each other than to the communities that had originally founded them. Such circumstances developed steadily from 2500 to 2200 BC, and the shared identification may have been furthered by military and imperial ambitions like those of Akkad, which they collectively experienced. This period ended, however, through dramatic changes that befell marginal zones from the southern Levant to northern Mesopotamia around 2200 BC when three centuries of sustained aridity began, known as the Meghalayan. In line with the assertions of scholars such as Harvey Weiss, I conclude that these conditions contributed to the nearly wholesale abandonment of the most marginal communities within this region, the decline of still others, and a spike in settlement within adjacent regions with greater rainfall, such as the Levant and the Zagros, or perennial water courses such as the Euphrates Valley. However, unlike Weiss, I interpret the migrations from this region not as habitat-tracking but rather as that of refugees, whose agency ultimately contributed to diverse trajectories and the pursuit of varied means of subsistence as many entered different ecological and economic environments. Thus, in addition to some residual agropastoralism, out of necessity members of these abandoned communities entered various trades, including mercenarism, ideally suited for the employ of young men during periods of extensive conflict and imperial expansion. With estimates between several hundred thousand and half a million inhabitants put to flight across this region in the twenty-second century BC, the scope for cultural exchange and the impact of Amorite factions among their host communities was significant.

These circumstances leave us at the doorstep of our next major set of textual sources for Amorites during the late third millennium, associated with the Third Dynasty of Ur. In Chapter 3, an examination of social and political conditions in southern Mesopotamia after the fall of Akkad (ca. 2200 to 2000 BC) suggests that conditions were conducive to the reception and integration of Amorites and other migrants, who over the preceding century had gradually adapted to their new circumstances. The Gutian interlude, followed by a no less chaotic period of domination by the city of Ur, I argue, created openings for the political elevation of Amorites already present, and new economic

opportunities, such as mercenarism and mercantile activity, that drew in still other Amorite arrivals. While many Amorites had been longstanding members of southern Mesopotamian city-states, unabating aridity and its continuing effects coupled with new opportunities associated with the Ur III state contributed to a continued pull-factor for social elements from neighboring regions along the Euphrates and Tigris river valleys and the Zagros Mountains. Consequently, once the Ur III state was itself subject to instability, its balkanization served as the basis for the reformulation of city-states led by a range of public servants and military men, many of them Amorites.

Analogous circumstances in the Levant and Egypt during that late third millennium appear to have contributed to very similar changes in the political landscape, with notable realignments of their economies and a seeming rise in mercenary participation by Asiatics in Egypt. Although uncertainties have persisted about whether any of these Asiatics can be associated with the broader phenomena identified in Mesopotamia and the northern Levant, the timing of these circumstances and that they follow upon significant disruptions of settlement in the Levant suggest that they should be considered together. Furthermore, these conditions contributed to shared experiences among Levantine populations that served to further cultivate shared traditions and a broader collective identity.

With emerging opportunities for political control of a number of Mesopotamian and Levantine centers, Amorite rulers early in the second millennium were presented, as the Gutians and Sumerians before them, with their own opportunity to expand their hegemony. In Chapter 4, I identify various mechanisms that contributed to the creation of a broad social Amorite identity that featured regional trajectories of cultural development (i.e., cultures) across the Near East during the early MBA (ca. 2000–1800 BC). The imperial ambitions of early Amorite rulers (though never truly realized), which continued into the second half of the MBA, along with the activities of merchants, contributed to a flourishing of cultural traditions. Royal patronage, which drew heavily on third-millennium Mesopotamian legacy, employed monuments such as palace and temple construction, but also warmaking and competitive emulation to advance their own legitimacy and expansionist aims. A major element of this expansion was focused upon the resettlement and domination of the once-again-productive marginal steppe in the "zone of uncertainty" from 1900 BC. The establishment and expansion of territorial states by ambitious rulers from across Mesopotamia and the Levant, among which Amorite rulers played an exceedingly conspicuous role, contributed to an urban renaissance of sorts. While no ruler, not even Hammurapi, would manage to establish anything resembling the extent or endurance of the Akkadian Empire, Akkad clearly came to be identified as a benchmark for the political aspirations of these early dynasts, with figures such as Sargon at center stage in literary traditions of the period.

During this period, the activities of merchants gave Amorite enclaves a foothold in the eastern Nile Delta, trading opportunities in central Anatolia, and connections with the Persian Gulf, and quite possibly the Indus. These exchange networks, as suggested by Old Assyrian (OA) trade networks, were powerful mechanisms for extending political and economic control, and through these, influence. Not only did control of particular networks provide access to critical resources, but it might likewise restrict access by others to these same resources. Similarly, these networks were easily exploited by the kingdoms that underwrote their activities. Along with the increasing exchange of specialists, these networks also provided grounds for the founding of foreign communities, whose presence in cities, as evident at Avaris, contributed to the rise of factions who could do the bidding of these foreign rulers abroad. This is a likely scenario, for example, behind the rise of the Fifteenth "Hyksos" Dynasty in the eastern Nile Delta during the late MBA.

The warfare that had been endemic to the late third millennium did not abate during the OB Period. While it contributed to instability for many dynasties, in remarkable ways it contributed to exchanges of personnel, mobility of individuals, and non-contiguous polities that brought about more intensive cultural exchanges than would have existed without them. Thus, it furthered one of the processes by which, gradually, an Amorite koine began to take shape. Therefore, it was, I argue, a combination of the intensive cultural exchanges by migrants, merchants, and mercenaries, archetypes of the extensive cultural exchanges attested throughout the MBA, that the ongoing negotiation of Amorite identity established the context for achievements of well-known rulers such as Hammurapi of Babylon.

The work ends its treatment of Amorite social history in Chapter 5 by examining the so-called age of Amorites, during the second half of the OB Period (ca. 1800–1600 BC), a period of unquestionable importance to any discussion of Amorite identity. There I lay out the basis for the significance of the term Amorite in this period, how it served as a means of binding and bounding groups who, through competition and emulation, shared in a range of customs and practices. The residue of these practices were constellations of material culture that comprise the Amorite koine, a label stemming from their principal association with Amorite rulers and elites from the Persian Gulf to the Nile Delta during the late MBA. The negotiation of Amorite identity across the Near East during this period fundamentally meant that, while many elements of distinct constellations of material culture bear resemblance to one another, the appropriation of individual elements of these constellations were mediated by local circumstances, social necessities, tastes, and traditions. Thus, Amorite identity during this period constituted, in the clearest sense, a social identity, creating a basis for unity by transcending traditional geographic, political, and cultural boundaries. In the absence of a single dominating

political structure, comparisons may be made with Renaissance Italy, which experienced a similar degree of cultural unity, and yet regional and social diversity, fraught as it also was with competitive emulation and war, and yet robust exchange.

The work concludes in earnest in Chapter 6 with a review of these historical episodes by recasting them in light of the sources of social power, as articulated by the historian Michael Mann.[32] Mann identifies ideological, military, economic, and political power as the bases for social power. It is suggested that the convergence or piggy-backing of these individual strands contribute to the significance of Amorite social identity during the MBA. Where one or another of these aspects can be identified among earlier Amorite communities, by the first half of the second millennium Amorite elites possessed access to each of these power collectives. For this reason, Amorite cultural institutions and traditions were conspicuous across a wide geographic expanse of the Near East in a fashion usually only associated with the social contiguity often associated with periods of imperial control.

[32] Mann 2012.
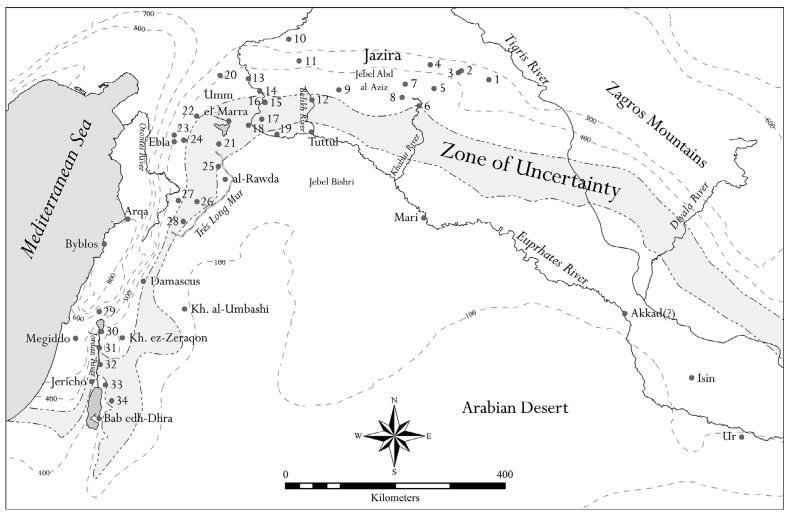
COMMUNITIES AT THE MARGINS

The Origins of Amorite Identity, 2500–2200 BC

Any effort to understand the negotiation of Amorite identity during the third millennium BC must seek to explain how later Amorite identities can be related to the earliest appearance of Amorites groups, notably those in Mesopotamian texts from the second half of the third millennium BC. The earliest references to Amorites divide into those before the end of Akkadian rule (2150 BC) and those primarily from the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 BC), a period from which sources referencing Amorites and their activities grow exponentially. Before the Ur III, references to Amorites locate them, broadly speaking, within a marginal zone defined by rainfed agropastoralism that stretched from the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, westward across the Tigris River, the Jazira, and the Euphrates River, into the northern Levant (Figure 2.1). Despite the possibility of locating Amorite activities within this region, they were not the exclusive inhabitants of this zone. They interacted with Sumerians, Akkadians, and the kingdom of Ebla and its surrounding communities as well as with a number of other poorly understood groups, such as the Subareans, Gutians, and Elamites.

Relative climatic stability throughout the first three-quarters of the third millennium contributed to a territorial extensification of agropastoralism, pushing ever farther into the steppe. The growth of Ebla and its economic foundation on wool production and the proliferation of sites throughout the steppic zone of northern Mesopotamia and the Levant were products of this expansion. Because the economics of this vast steppe region were

2.1 Map of sites discussed in chapter, ca. 2500–2200 BC. Note location of the zone of uncertainty and très long mur. (1) Hammoukar, (2) Leilan (Shekhna), (3) Mohammed Diyab, (4) Urkesh (Mozan), (5) Nawar (Brak), (6) Bderi, (7) Beydar, (8) Chagar Bazar, (9) Chuera, (10) Titriş Höyük, (11) Kazane Höyük, (12) Hammam et-Turkman, (13) Carchemish, (14) Qara Quzaq, (15) Banat, (16) Kabir, (17) Sweyhat, (18) Emar (Meskene), (19) Halawa, (20) Tilbeşar, (21) Munbatah, (22) Aleppo, (23) Afis, (24) Tuqan, (25) al-Shakusiah, (26) as-Sour, (27) Qatna (Mishrife), (28) Sh'airat, (29) Hazor, (30) Sha'ar Hagolan, (31) Tell Abu en-Ni'aj, (32) Umm Hammad, (33) Iktanu, (34) Iskander.

Map by Amy Karoll

overwhelmingly shaped by agropastoralist expansion in the first half of the third millennium, by the mid-third its inhabitants effectively constituted what can be identified as an agropastoral guild or *community of practice*. As suggested by the region's archaeological record, social interactions across this zone shaped the emergence of shared traditions with direct implications for material culture, ranging from settlement planning and defenses to the character of cultic emplacements. The association of this region with the presence of Amorites therefore permits the suggestion that the inhabitants of these settlements, such as Umm el-Marra, constituted some of the earliest Amorite communities.

If this reconstruction is correct, then understanding the effects of the abandonment of these settlements during the late third millennium lies at the center of efforts to track Amorite communities and the customs that accompanied these individuals to the communities among which they sought refuge. Indeed, the last quarter of the third millennium reveals a volatile period during which both geopolitical and climatological changes appear to have contributed to the dislocation of populations and social change on an unprecedented scale across this region. Following violent incursions of Early Dynastic kings from the southeast, inscriptions during the Akkadian Period (2350–2150 BC) implicate Amorites in resistance to the Akkadian Empire. These and other references in Akkadian to Amorites clarify processes by which the geographic spread of Amorite persons broadened during the late third millennium. Such military interventions provoked resistance by Amorite communities but also increased sociopolitical complexity within Amorite and neighboring communities. This process did not occur in isolation but was accompanied by demographic shifts from 2200 BC that were driven by a catastrophic decline in rainfall across the region. Unsurprisingly, the effects of this disruption included the abandonment of many settlements as well as the contraction of others across a marginal zone of northern Mesopotamia and eastern portions of the Levant known as the "zone of uncertainty." The correlation of this measurable demographic shift with a regional decline in rainfall indicates that, in the midst of military and political pressures from Sumer and Akkad, northern Mesopotamian and northern Levantine communities faced an environmental crisis that forced their migration to neighboring regions with higher rainfall or riverine communities. This, of course, resulted in substantial changes to the subsistence activities of these displaced communities as they sought to adapt to new circumstances.

LOCALIZING EARLY AMORITES

A discussion of the earliest evidence for Amorite identities is certainly complicated by the limited number of references to Amorites before the Ur III (pre-2112 BC). It is further complicated by the various terms identified

with Amorites and the opaque contexts in which references to them occur. In the earliest sources, Amorites are designated by Sumerian mar-tu.[1] This is rendered in Akkadian as *amurru*, which is the basis for our reference to them as Amorites.[2] Several references to mar-tu appear during the mid-third millennium and reveal the presence of Amorites among southern Mesopotamian communities, such as Shurrapak and Lagash, and also identify a place known as the "land of mar-tu."[3] By the reign of Ur-Nanshe, an Early Dynastic king of Lagash, a fragment of a stele found at Ur indicates that a canal embankment may have been constructed "against" the mar-tu,[4] suggesting tensions between mar-tu and some southern Mesopotamian communities as early as the mid-third millennium BC.

The earliest references to mar-tu in the west, however, occur in the Ebla texts.[5] There they are identified not only near Mt. Bashar (Jebel Bishri) but also as active near Emar, as inhabitants of both Tuttul and "the land of mar-tu." Alfonso Archi has suggested that kings of the territory of the mar-tu, referred to in the Ebla texts as mar-tu[ki], were referred to with the same term, "en," as were Eblaite kings, thereby concluding that they already wielded significant political clout in the region. The mar-tu, like other communities mentioned in the Ebla texts, even possessed a "council of elders," and at least one peace treaty was made with the mar-tu. The exchange of Amorite personnel is also evident, including merchants and fugitives.[6] So-called mar-tu daggers were exchanged by kings of Ebla as gifts and within the contexts of treaty-making with Mari,[7] though the exact association of such daggers with mar-tu remains unclear. While some of the names reveal what are in later periods identified as linguistic features of Amorite, others do not, suggesting that even in the third millennium names alone were ambiguous markers of Amorite affiliation.

Alfonso Archi is probably correct to suggest that, although these references may localize some Amorite communities around the Middle Euphrates, the core areas of their activity were primarily in the hinterland regions to both sides of the Euphrates Valley, namely to the northeast of Ebla and east of the

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[1] In keeping with the most recent practices in rendering the Sumerograms, mar-tu is employed in this work, unless an alternative writing has been published in a translation.

[2] Although other variations of spelling have been offered to identify Amorites, sometimes in an attempt to distinguish Mari's Amorite communities (e.g., Amurrites) from references to Amorites in the Bible (see Fleming 2004), in light of the conclusions of this study this approach is considered unfeasible and unwarranted. There are too many different Amorite communities to permit their qualification by means of unique spellings or pronunciations of the term Amorite.

[3] For a summary of sources and references, see A. Porter 2012: table 5, p. 314.

[4] *RIME* 1.9.1.31, p. 117.

[5] Archi 1985.

[6] Ibid.: 9–10.

[7] Archi and Biga 2003.

Euphrates Bend. The preponderance of early references connected with mar-tu suggest that individuals identified as Amorites were sometimes at odds with sedentary communities along the Euphrates Valley, although it does not indicate to what extent these communities were themselves Amorite. This, however, seems to make sense of the Akkadian Empire's later encounters with Amorites at Mt. Bashar, as will be discussed, in which efforts were likely directed at securing passage through this region against disruption by oppor-tunistic raiding, as is later attested in the Mari archives during the second half of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA).[8]

In light of the Ebla references, it is not difficult to understand that the terms used to identify Amorites, Sumerian mar-tu (Akk. *amurru*), is the term with which Sumerians identified the "west." It seems reasonable that early percep-tions of the western territories associated with the presence of Amorites (i.e., mar-tu[ki]) served as the basis for this identity from the mid-third millennium BC. Later, during the OB Period (1800–1600 BC), the use of OB terms such as Benjaminites ("sons of the right" [riverbank]) or Bensimalites ("sons of the left" [riverbank]) and the Suteans ("Southerners") reveal a fundamental fix-ation on directional references for labeling these Amorite tribes in a landscape with relatively few prominent features outside of its river systems.[9] The available references to Amorites before the Akkadian Period suggest a long-standing association with the west, but certainly northern Mesopotamia, and point to the existence of distinct Amorite communities with significant polit-ical complexity such that these communities possessed their own rulers and councils of elders, as textual references make clear. The second millennium references to Amorites also suggest that, beyond the ascription Amorite, tribal identities likely prevailed as the principal affiliation of individuals and their kin groups during the third millennium. Unfortunately, such a level of resolution is unavailable for the reconstruction of group and social identity in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant during the third millennium.

Because of the limits of mid-third millennium textual sources to do more than generally localize Amorite communities, we are left to employ material culture in order to try to determine if and how Amorite identity might have been expressed through different customs and traditions. To this end, an exploration of agropastoral settlements across the marginal zones from the northern Levant into northern Mesopotamia reveals the potential for tracing the origins of Amorite communities identified in third millennium sources. Although an attempt is made throughout this chapter to consider various lines of evidence for other similarly affected communities that also inhabited this region, such as Hurrians and Subareans, whose experiences in the region were

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[8] Charpin 2010: 242.
[9] Whiting 1995: 1231.

similar,[10] an adequate treatment of their plight cannot be undertaken in this work. Nevertheless, the archaeological records of a number of settlements in territories that were inhabited by Amorite groups are suggestive of their affiliation with Amorite communities and may, therefore, add weight to efforts to further identify them.

ECONOMIES AT THE MARGINS

The first half of the third millennium saw a gradual growth of settlement across the cultivable margins of the Fertile Crescent, stretching from the eastern fringes of the Levant into northern Mesopotamia and east, across to the Zagros Mountains of western Iran. By the mid-third millennium, steppe lands within this zone that received more than 200 mm of annual rainfall were intensively exploited for herding and hunting, alongside limited rainfed agriculture (Figure 2.1), and for this reason these communities are identified as agropastoral.[11] This region encompasses the principal locus within which most of the references to Amorites discussed earlier are situated. Even so, because of the limits of our sources, it remains uncertain that this is the only region inhabited by communities that we might label Amorite, and it remains likely that some Amorite communities inhabited other parts of the Levant, southern Anatolia, and Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, the loci of references to Amorites in the mid-third millennium serve as a basis for focusing our initial efforts to correlate archaeological remains with Amorite communities.

The economic impetus for the growth of agropastoral communities was the trade of the high-value secondary products from the rearing of sheep and goats, principally wool. The overall production of wool from these communities was, however, directly dependent on predictable access to ample pastureland. The value that wool fetched from the Early Dynastic Period through the early second millennium BC appears to correlate with the extent of direct control of its production by these agropastoral communities. Insofar as limited records permit, when these agropastoral communities were at their peak, during the Early Dynastic Period (2500 BC), wool obtained its highest value. By the Akkadian Period (2350 BC), texts reveal that wool had dropped in value by 18 percent, and by the Ur III (2112 BC) it had dropped even further.[12] Wool, comparable with oil in the modern era, seems therefore to have yielded its greatest value when its production was controlled, as by economic alliances functioning somewhat like a modern cartel.

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[10] Salvini 2000; Bartash 2018; Michalowski 1986.
[11] Butzer 1997: 264.
[12] Foster 2014: 119.

Agriculture within agropastoral communities focused on the subsistence of the residents of these communities whose primary aim was the support of the principal economic driver, herding. Rainfall across a substantial part of this steppic zone, which usually received only 200 to 250 mm of rainfall annually, was only just sufficient to support subsistence agriculture. This region has been referred to, therefore, as the "zone of uncertainty," due to its potential for unpredictable yields that occurred during years when rainfall did not reach normative levels.[13] Its extension to the south and east of higher rainfall zones from Iran to the southern Levant, which is traditionally identified as the "Fertile Crescent," has earned it the apt alternative label the "Fragile Crescent."[14] Under the best of circumstances, this zone permitted the cultivation of resilient crops such as emmer wheat and lentils,[15] but most importantly it could provide pasture for herding and some hunting of migratory herds moving between oases in this steppe. Hunting was evidently not for subsistence, but rather centered on an interest in the capture of live animals, such as onagers, which would be interbred with donkeys. These were known in Sumerian as *kunga* ([anše]bar-an) and they were much prized among elites, for whom they served to draw chariots and, likely for this reason, for inclusion as prestige items in their burials, as in the royal tombs of Ur.[16]

Settlement Extensification in the Zone of Uncertainty

Because sufficient rainfall appears to have prevailed throughout most of the third millennium BC, the number of settlements in this zone grew steadily during what is called the "second urban revolution" and the region's population swelled.[17] These were boom years for the region, but this boom developed over centuries such that it would have been scarcely discernible to the region's inhabitants, and the regime would have seemed entirely stable. Predictably, however, this set up conditions for catastrophic changes when precipitation declined and agriculture and herding could no longer be supported. As the name for the region implies, periodic, if short-lived, droughts meant that an effective capacity existed beyond which more herding could not be supported. Any precipitous decline in rainfall meant a sudden, sharp contraction in yields and a recession of pastureland that would at least temporarily have driven herders and their animals into more densely populated and intensively cultivated lands around urban centers in higher rainfall zones.

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[13] Wilkinson 2000: 3–14; Wilkinson, Philip, Bradbury, et al. 2014: 53–54.
[14] Wilkinson 2003: 100.
[15] Riehl and Bryson 2007.
[16] Weber 2012: 169–70, 75–76; Mitchell 2018: 89–95.
[17] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 233–82; Wilkinson, Philip, Bradbury, et al. 2014: 80–82.

This then contributed to occasional tensions as texts and literary traditions from later periods amply illustrate.

A number of sites within this zone have been excavated in recent decades and thus provide a glimpse into the changing social complexity of these communities during the third millennium. A critical characteristic of the settlement pattern in this region was the spatial relationship between settlements, with the notable difference being that most of the largest sites were located in areas that received substantially more rainfall or were located within riparian environments such as the Euphrates Valley. These factors qualified them as anchor communities but also as potential refugia for the inhabitants of agriculturally marginal zones nearby. During the first half of the third millennium larger sites such as Ebla and Mari, like other sites in the Euphrates Valley as revealed in the Ebla texts, and still others such as Urkesh and Nawar in the Jazira, functioned initially as anchors for settlement expansion into marginal lands. They served as economic centers and markets consuming and converting the raw materials for a burgeoning textile industry that required vast quantities of wool, the primary byproduct of sheep herding that was the focus of pastoralist activity within the zone of uncertainty. Such a role for these centers is supported by the vast collection of documents from Ebla's Palace G, which are dated to ca. 2350 BC.[18] These detail a robust textile industry at Ebla, which managed economic ties to towns and villages throughout the northern Levant.[19] These centers, particularly Mari and Ebla, have long since been identified for their potential to address questions of Amorite identity particularly because of the presence of Amorites in third and second millennium sources from these sites.

Because these large sites served as the economic centers for the exploitation and settlement of their marginal hinterlands, the later displacement of populations from the zone of uncertainty also would have severely disrupted settlement within these centers and their subsistence. While most settlements in the zone of uncertainty were relatively small, at their peak the total population inhabiting sites of 5 ha or more in northern Mesopotamia represent likely no fewer than 300,000 inhabitants,[20] and the addition of smaller settlements would likely raise this figure substantially (see Appendix: Tables 2A.1–2A.3). This also does not account for inhabitants in the zone of uncertainty within the Levant. Since the urban plans of sites such as Ebla appear to have been dominated by massive palace and temple complexes with limited space dedicated to domestic habitation, the total settled areas of these centers appears to

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[18] Peyronel 2014.
[19] Archi 1999; Pasquali 1997.
[20] Weiss 2015: 45.

have remained limited in comparison with the growth of agropastoralist towns and their populations during the mid-third millennium.

The earliest and largest settlements within the zone of uncertainty appear to be those that were located within the least marginal parts. This included the northernmost parts of northern Mesopotamia and the westernmost parts of the Levant's eastern fringe. Being located in areas where rainfall was just slightly higher and therefore more reliable, these sites were less exposed to the risks associated with regular fluctuations in rainfall. As conditions permitted, settlement creep encouraged exploitation of additional areas seen to offer potential for agriculture and pastoralism up to the limits of agriculture within this marginal zone. The risks inherent in the establishment of these new settlements were back-stopped, however, by dependence on the more stable anchor communities in the humid zones behind them. During the third millennium, the frontier therefore pushed out from the more humid regions into the arid steppe, buttressed by the subsistence efforts of earlier enclaves.

This pattern is evident in northern Mesopotamia within a region known as the Jazira and to the east of the road between Damascus and Aleppo in the northern Levant. The largest settlements were located in the wettest parts of the Jazira south of the foothills of Anatolia. Along the upper Balikh lay Kazane Höyük (100 ha), while to its east Tell Chuera (90 ha) was among the earliest examples of the so-called *Kranzhügeln* sites that were more common in the area to the south. Following a track east of Chuera were Beydar (28 ha) and Mozan (ancient Urkesh; 130 ha) with Chagar Bazar (15 ha), Arbid (50 ha), and Brak (ancient Nagar; 70 ha) to its south, and east of these Tell Leilan (ancient Shekhna; 90 ha), Hammoukar (98 ha), and Mohammed Diyab (25 ha). Together they compose nearly 70 percent (696 ha) of total settled area for sites larger than 5 ha, and they would have served to buttress intensifying efforts to exploit agropastoral lands farther south, yet north of the Euphrates.

This effort to exploit marginal land to the south is evident in a large number of sites identified as *Kranzhügeln*, ring-shaped mounds mostly settled through the mid-third millennium BC in the Khabur triangle and south of it around the Jebel Abd al-Aziz range (ancient Mt. Dibar).[21] Although none of these has been excavated,[22] these settlements featured central mounds or acropoleis surrounded by lower towns that are today encircled by earthen mounds, which are the dilapidated remains of their mudbrick walls. Although it is not known whether these "hollow cities" – a term that refers to the large areas they enclosed that appear to have been devoid of buildings – were entirely occupied, the largest of these sites comprises more than 230 ha of settlement

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[21] For survey data, see N. Kouchoukos 1999. For identification of Mt. Dibar, see Stol 1979: 25–26.

[22] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 256–59; Meyer 2011: 129–32.

during the third quarter of the third millennium (see Appendix, Table 2A.1). Thus, these communities reveal a considerable expansion of settlement in this region over the third millennium and what seems to have been an intensive effort to increasingly exploit marginal zones for subsistence agriculture and pastoralism.[23]

Interrupting the continuous arc of settlement to the west, from northern Mesopotamia into the northern Levant, were the settlements of the Middle Euphrates Valley, located between the Euphrates's intersection with the Khabur River and the southern highlands of Anatolia. Here too settlement expanded considerably over the course of the third millennium, reaching a high water mark around 2300 BC as still more settlements were added to the extant pattern when sites such as Banat and Selenkahiye were established.[24] Sites of 5 ha or more are few and constitute perhaps as little as 338 ha of settled land north of Mari. Thus, while the thin ribbon of land along the Euphrates upstream from Mari hosted nearly half as many people as similarly sized settlements throughout the Jazira, the density was remarkably higher, betraying the higher agricultural yields afforded by the river valley and its capacity to support a larger population. The varied shape and dimensions of these communities as well as their material culture suggest various degrees of social hierarchy, complexity, and competing groups when compared to the *Kranzhügeln* of the Jazira.

Further to the west and mostly south of the road between Aleppo and the Euphrates River, settlements with a total inhabited area of about 65 ha exploited the marginal landscapes near Lake Jabbul, among them Umm el-Marra.[25] Umm el-Marra is one of the few examples of sites that emerged within the zone of uncertainty during the mid-third millennium before declining around 2200 BC.[26] Possibly identified with ancient Tuba mentioned in the Ebla texts, it was situated at an important juncture among steppic communities that at the time hosted large populations of wild onagers (*Equus hemionus*). Archaeological evidence from Umm el-Marra reveals the intensification of exploitation and processing of onagers at the site from the EBA to the MBA, with an inverse relationship to sheep–goat exploitation, suggesting shifts in its economic foci.[27] During the second and third quarters of the third millennium onagers were sufficiently prestigious that they were a mainstay of the funerary deposits within nine tomb complexes built in the center of Umm el-Marra, which probably belonged to the site's ruling elite.

[23] Wilkinson, Philip, Bradbury, et al. 2014: 96.
[24] Cooper 2006: 15–20; Finkbeiner, Novák, Sakal, et al. 2015b.
[25] Yukich 2013: 194.
[26] Curvers and Schwartz 1997; Schwartz, Curvers, Dunham, et al. 2003; Schwartz, Curvers, Dunham, et al. 2006; Schwartz, Curvers, Dunham, et al. 2012
[27] Schwartz, Curvers, Gerritsen, et al. 2000: 447; Nichols and Weber 2006.

As such, they were likely a reflection of the economic status of its rulers. These same complexes also included infant burials that may be evidence of sacrificial rituals associated with these elite burials.[28] The wealth of these rulers appears to have derived from an economy of rearing *kunga*, donkey-onager hybrids of very high value.[29]

Moving into the northern Levant, to the southwest of Lake Jabbul, was the territory associated with the kingdom of Ebla. The marginal eastern stretches of the kingdom of Ebla were exploited by eighteen sites in the vicinity of Lake Matkh, including Tuqan and Munbatah.[30] Still farther south, from northeast to southeast of Qatna a number of new settlements emerged. These include tells al–Shakusiah, al–Rawda, as–Sour, and Sh'airat, all of which track between 10 to 17 km west of the 220 km long wall, the so-called *très long mur* (i.e., "very long wall" in English; see Figure 2.1).[31] This wall, the remains of which are less than 1.5 high and roughly 1 m wide, seemingly traces the eastern limits of agropastoral lands.[32] It was likely intended to serve as some type of territorial marker as it would not appear to have provided a defensible fortification wall.[33] It may have indicated to shepherds that they were reentering arable lands under the jurisdiction of Ebla, since there are no indications that the wall functioned as a physical barrier. Based on its association with settlements founded during the mid-third millennium, its construction has been dated to about 2500 BC.[34]

Al–Rawda, situated on the 200 mm isohyet of the eastern Levant approximately 100 km south of Umm el–Marra, is one of the towns arrayed behind the *très long mur* that has been recently explored (Figure 2.1). It was settled ca. 2500 BC when it assumed its *Kranzhügeln* shape with a core area of 8 ha.[35] Although it clearly accommodated pastoral nomads and hunters as evidenced by the presence of numerous nearby kites,[36] Rawda also permitted considerable farming, and was thus an agropastoral community. A complex water reservoir system made habitation possible in this region. South of Rawda, as–Sour was a 9.5 ha settlement enclosed by a rampart that was first settled around 2500 BC lasting into the EB IVB, after 2350 BC (see Table 2.1).[37] The largest site along the margins of the northern Levant was, however, Tell Sh'airat,

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[28] Schwartz, Curvers, Dunham, et al. 2012.

[29] Weber 2008; Weber 2012: 168–70.

[30] Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013.

[31] Geyer, al–Dbiyat, Awad, et al. 2007: 278–79.

[32] Geyer, Awad, al–Dbiyat, et al. 2010.

[33] It is not, however, comparable to later Mesopotamian walls built to limit Amorite incursions (contra Weiss 2014: 375).

[34] Barge, Castel and Brochier 2014: 182.

[35] Castel 2007: 161; Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 611–12; Barge, Castel and Brochier 2014: 175.

[36] Castel 2007: 167; Barge, Castel, and Brochier 2014: 177–80.

[37] Georges 2014.

TABLE 2.1. *Main archaeological phases of the second half of the third millennium discussed*

Phases	Dates BC	Historical Correlations
EB IV	2500–2000	
EB IVA	2500–2350	Early Dynastic–Early Akkadian
EB IVB	2350–2000	Late Akkadian to Ur III

which is located approximately 50 km southwest of as-Sour. This well-planned circular site of 25 ha was 580 m in diameter and featured an upper and lower town both of which were fortified. Founded around 2500 BC, the site was a remarkable 96 ha and lasted into the EB IVB (2350–2000 BC),[38] though the exact date of its abandonment remains indeterminate.

South of Qatna other settlements in southern Syria, such as Khirbet al-Umbashi, perpetuated the exploitation of this marginal zone in the southern Levant. After the start of the EB IVB (ca. 2350 BC), Umbashi grew rapidly from 30 to 60 ha.[39] The new inhabitants at Umbashi settled within the confines of its ancient wall. On the basis of faunal data, its economic basis was sheep and goat herding.[40] The peak of this activity was early in the final quarter of the third millennium, and thus its floruit appears to occur after Ebla's rise (from ca. 2350 BC). In fact, it may have achieved independence because of Ebla's decline.

Located just west of the *très long mur*, these contemporaneous agropastoral settlements adhere to a strikingly similar layout that is suggestive of their establishment within a fairly short period of time during the mid-third millennium BC.[41] The location of these sites at such a distance to the east of Ebla supports the hypothesis that during the third millennium the region experienced greater agricultural and herding potential than at present, as historical rainfall patterns also indicate. During this period these towns were planned around a central core with streets radiating from their centers. Gradually, they were fortified, and the rings of fortifications of some of these may reflect phases in their expansions. As these towns expanded, lower towns grew around the upper towns and these were also enclosed with fortification walls. Much work remains to be done to more fully understand the growth of these communities. However, the settlement pattern associated with these towns and the timing of their emergence reflect a relatively rapid extensification of agricultural lands in the mid-third millennium that can be connected with an explosive growth in

[38] Georges 2016.
[39] Braemer, Échallier, and Taraqji 2004: 364; Braemer and Taraqji 2016: 201–2.
[40] Braemer, Échallier, and Taraqji 2004: 367.
[41] See Castel and Peltenburg 2007: 614.

the textile industry, which was dependent on the supply of wool provided by herding communities.

Extensification, Urbanism, and Their Failure in the Southern Levant

Although the issue of urbanism in the southern Levant during the first half of the third millennium is usually treated as an entirely distinct social and economic phenomenon, recent recognition that urbanism represented an experiment of sorts in the south allows this phenomenon to be related to the analogous phenomenon of settlement extensification in the northern Levant.[42] Both regions experienced roughly parallel settlement expansions during the first half of the third millennium that can be framed within the increasing economic exploitation of the region's different ecological zones by its urban centers. While agropastoralism dominated expansion into marginal zones in the eastern half of the northern Levant and across northern Mesopotamia, expansion in the southern Levant appears to have centered on efforts to exploit more humid regions, such as the highlands, for the production of oil and wine.

While the highlands were not open in this period for use as pastureland as in the north's marginal lands, they provided an ideal environment for expanded arboriculture (horticulture and viticulture), which took advantage of Egyptian demand.[43] This is illustrated perhaps most clearly by the marked arrival of southern Levantine transport vessels in Egypt during the late EB I that was followed by the expansion of this trade during the EB II (3100–2850 BC). These vessels are traditionally associated with the export of wine and various oils.[44] Because of limited settlement continuity during the EB III (2850–2500 BC) and its complete rupture by the mid-third millennium, the southern Levant's transition toward stable, long-term urbanism failed. There are few urban centers with continuous settlement throughout the second quarter of the third millennium. Settlement at other sites, such as Beth-Yerah, also appears uneven and points to gradual abandonments by about 2500 BC.[45] Superficially, this may seem to be an entirely dissimilar trend from settlement extensification in marginal zones in the north because of the distinct ecological niches that they occupied. However, both of these ventures were parallel land tenure endeavors during the first half of the third millennium despite the different land use strategies. The divergence in the results of these extensification efforts resulted from different factors, however, and because of this, the initial trajectories they shared have not been the focus of discussions.

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[42] Greenberg 2017: 34.
[43] Butzer 1997: 266–69.
[44] Stager 1992: 37–38.
[45] Greenberg 2017: 34–45.

While it makes sense that a "non-sedentary" pastoral component accompanied EB II-III settlement,[46] evidence that this was anything more than a requisite supplement to the largely horticultural focus of most southern Levantine towns is wanting.

Despite the success of agropastoral extensification in the north into the third quarter of the third millennium, the urban experiment in the southern Levant underwent a radical decline during a period known as the Early Bronze IV (2500–2000 BC; Table 2.1).[47] The EB IV is described as a largely rural period of "intense regionalism" and limited interactions between regions, resulting from the widespread abandonment of the southern Levant's urban centers and their settlement networks.[48] Insofar as the region's material culture evinces elements of continuity with the first half of the third millennium (e.g., ceramic traditions), settlement patterns suggest very limited continuity. Once thought to correlate with an onset of arid conditions, radiocarbon data now reveal that the abandonment of urban communities in the southern Levant occurred earlier, around 2500 BC[49] while settlement extensification in the north was still underway.

The recognition of the decoupling of urbanism's decline in the southern Levant from climatic decline, which occurred several centuries later (2200 BC), permits a wholesale reappraisal of the reasons for the interruption of the southern Levant's first urban phase.[50] It has also led to a reexamination of the process of urbanism in the southern Levant during the first half of the third millennium. At present, it remains unclear whether the situation in the southern Levant was the result of social, political, or demographic developments or a combination of factors, but no evidence points to a single phenomenon. Indeed, the crisis that beset this region resulted from various, uniquely local factors that contributed to the failure of urbanism and resulted in a ruralization of the region's settlement, which was likely accompanied by some degree of emigration as economic opportunities were sought elsewhere.

By the mid-third millennium, the maximum population of the southern Levant west of the Jordan is estimated to have been 150,000, occupying a total of about 600 ha of settled area, nearly half of which is accounted for among only twenty urban centers.[51] However, if these calculations were based on no more than 200 persons per hectare, this would be reduced to 120,000 persons. If half this density is applied (100 persons/ha) – a conservative figure that helps us to avoid overestimating these population movements – then as few as

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[46] Ibid.: 46–48.
[47] Prag 2014; Gophna 1992.
[48] Prag 2014: 389.
[49] Regev, Miroschedji, and Boaretto 2012; Regev, Miroschedji, Greenberg, et al. 2012
[50] Höflmayer 2015; Höflmayer 2017a; see also Kennedy 2016.
[51] This figure employs a density of 250 persons per ha; see M. Broshi and R. Gophna 1984.

60,000 persons may have inhabited the southern Levant by around 2500 BC, followed by a precipitous decline of the existing urban centers. These figures are likely to be even lower, however, owing to the fact that by the mid-third millennium only some of these urban centers were inhabited contemporaneously. In light of recent observations concerning the non-contemporaneous settlement among the region's roughly forty urban centers of more than 5 ha, it is likely we are even dealing with a population substantially below 60,000 by the mid-third millennium, when half of this population also resided in the central hill country. One estimate suggests as few as 10,000–15,000,[52] and it should be considered that a certain number of these EB IV settlements were probably only inhabited toward the end of the period (see Chapter 3). While a lack of radiocarbon data from previous excavations of Early Bronze Age settlements impedes a century-by-century resolution of the region's settlement trajectory,[53] when compared with settlement patterns in the northern Levant or northern Mesopotamia, the population of the southern Levant throughout the Early Bronze Age was very small.

Given the scale of settlement decline in the southern Levant after the middle of the third millennium, what accounts for its failed efforts to sustain an urban focus? Within the context of developments in neighboring regions, both conflict and economic opportunism present themselves as factors to consider in any attempt to understand this demographic decline. Disruptions due to conflict likely represent the first major factor behind this decline. The ravages of disease, war, and deportation wrought by both Egyptian intervention during the Fifth and Sixth dynasties of the Old Kingdom (2513–2191 BC) and internecine strife may have contributed to the destabilization of the few centers that were at the heart of the urban landscape. While there is little convincing evidence to consider disease, blight, or other natural phenomena as culprits in the depopulation of the region, the situation of the expeditionary activities of the Fourth and Fifth dynasties (2649–2374 BC) the lead up to the decline marking the EB IV raises the distinct possibility that warfare may have been partly to blame for the decline in the region's urban landscape. Although few Egyptian sources are available that make explicit Egypt's interest in the region, those we have suggest that the disruptions resulted from the employment of Egyptian force, and that they cannot be interpreted as unique occurrences in the absence of a complete historical record. Sahure (2506–2492 BC), a Fifth Dynasty pharaoh, led campaigns to the Sinai from where he returned with copper, and likewise carried out a naval expedition to

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[52] Gophna 1992: 156.
[53] For radiocarbon data from Early Bronze Age sites, see Regev, Miroschedji, and Boaretto 2012; Regev, Miroschedji, Greenberg, et al. 2012.

the Levantine coast that returned with Asiatic sailors.[54] Asiatics sailors appear, again, in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of Unas (2404–2374 BC) at Saqqara.[55] Weni's military expeditions – on no fewer than five occasions – into the Levant during the reign of Pepi I (2354–2310 BC),[56] while impossible to locate precisely,[57] point to the types of exploits, if not also their frequency, that the OK was capable of and the threat it posed to communities beyond the Sinai.[58] A lack of references to the very mines Egypt controlled in the Sinai during prior exploits by Snefru (2649–2609 BC), Pepi I, and others suggests that the Sinai was not the location of these later military exploits. That ships were required to reach the region may also indicate that it was probably located farther north.

In addition to the external threat posed by Egypt, there was the potential – and equally likely – threat posed by internecine warfare and competition among the region's urban elites, possibly in the context of attempts to extend control over neighbors in a process that paralleled contemporary conflicts between Ebla, Mari, and other northern Mesopotamian states. In addition to piecemeal evidence for Egyptian raids, the evidence for warfare is not inconsiderable. Among these are extensive fortification systems at major urban centers and the destructions of sites. Destructions are attested at Jericho, Tel Halif, 'Ai, and Leviah,[59] but also Yarmuth[60] which, despite inconsistent evidence for the final destruction across the site, might implicate conflict and violence in the ultimate demise of some of these urban centers. Keeping in mind the very small number of large urban centers that comprised the urban landscape of the southern Levant in the mid-third millennium, such destructions are more than adequate to reveal the volatility that preceded their abandonment.[61] It is difficult to ignore, therefore, the combined evidence for the destruction and abandonment of urban centers that marked the lengthy transition from the EB III to the EB IV in the mid-third millennium, alongside the historical evidence from Egypt.

A second factor in the southern Levant's changed demographics was economic opportunism, contributing to internal population movements as well as emigration. Such a model stands in stark opposition to traditional interpretations that attributed these shifts to a movement by sedentary populations to pastoral nomadism, or to endogenous developments away from existing political centers.[62] Several areas of settlement intensification within the southern

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[54] Bietak 1988.
[55] Bietak 2007b: 419.
[56] *AEL* 1, 18–23.
[57] Contra de Miroschedji 2012.
[58] For example, *AEL* 1, 18–23.
[59] Paz 2011.
[60] Callaway 1993: 43–44; de Miroschedji 1993: 661; de Miroschedji 2008.
[61] Contra Greenberg 2017: 44–45.
[62] Mazar 1990: 157–58; Prag 2014: 397.

Levant illustrate that while settlement in the highlands declined after the mid-third millennium as its urban centers were gradually abandoned, opportunities emerged in association with both a booming copper trade and settlement extensification in the zone of uncertainty. In this reconstruction, the abandonment of urban centers is at least partly accounted for by the emergence of new foci of economic activity, including copper mining and the lowland roads associated with the transport of copper as well as specialized pastoralism in marginal zones in the east, particularly during the first three centuries of the EB IV (2500–2200 BC).[63] This can be supported with the observation that rainfall may have experienced a peak during these same years, just prior to the onset of aridification,[64] with the potentially paradoxical consequence of considerable erosion to agricultural land, as may have been the case at Iskander.[65] Such circumstances may have contributed to some emigration for opportunities in the northern Levant's marginal zone,[66] but also a degree of settlement aggregation along the "copper corridor," the route from Wadi Feinan through the Negev and the northern Sinai. Such an explanation finds favor with the persistence of OK control into the twenty-third century and a correlation between the demise of centralized control in Egypt and the decline of the copper trade.

The drive to the eastern frontier of the Levant, particularly in the northern Levant, not only created economic opportunities in these emerging communities,[67] but also would have created opportunities within Ebla's hinterland as a demographic shift to the east occurred, a process already in progress when emigration to the north from Canaan began. The persistence of urban centers in Jordan, such as Khirbet Iskander, Tell el-Hammam,[68] Tell Iktanu, and a number of others around Hammam, suggests that similar opportunities may have existed in southern marginal zones in the east where agropastoralism was practiced, if on a smaller scale owing to the more limited size of this area (Figure 2.1). Each of these sites continued to operate as a fortified center during the EB IV, a period when sites to their west were abandoned.

Beyond an uptick in pastoral activity, a bustling if specialized economy surrounding the extraction of copper also attracted many in the southern Levant to areas where economic activity continued in the wake of the declining opportunities in the region's urban centers.[69] Copper, along with various

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[63] Schloen 2017: 63.
[64] Bar-Matthews, Ayalon, and Kaufman 1998.
[65] Cordova and Long Jr. 2010: 31–34.
[66] Wilkinson, Philip, Bradbury, et al. 2014: 92; also Greenberg 2017: 48.
[67] Wilkinson, Philip, Bradbury, et al. 2014: 92.
[68] Collins, Kobs, and Luddeni 2015.
[69] Marta D'Andrea suggests placing the development of the copper trade through the Negev in the later EB IV based on ceramics (D'Andrea 2014b: 127–28, 232). However, I identify the

precious stones, had been one of the main drivers of Egyptian interest in the southern Levant and, particularly, the Sinai especially during the OK, which was contemporaneous with the EB III and the first half of the EB IV (2850–2200 BC).[70] Various pharaonic expeditions to the Sinai and possibly beyond are attested.[71] Recent paleomagnetic dates confirm the persistence of copper mining in the Wadi Feinan during the second half of the third millennium.[72] These mines provide proxy dates for a contemporaneous group of both permanent and temporary settlements that lay along a "copper corridor" through the Negev to the west and into the northern Sinai toward the Egyptian Delta (Figure 2.2).[73] These sites provide unexpected evidence for this trade, namely in the form of copper ingots, of the type that were loaded on donkey caravans that plied the route from the mines to Egypt. Bitumen, salt, and other commodities from the Dead Sea region may also have been included in this trade. Study of ceramics from the Negev sites reveals their connections to Transjordanian sites and thus their association with the transshipment of copper from there to Egypt.[74] The westward extension of this route has also been identified with a string of sites through the northern Sinai.[75] This route did not exist in a vacuum, but was part of a series of routes through the Levant connecting with Egypt,[76] and the "Byblos run" from Lebanon may have operated contemporaneously until the end of the OK. The various settlements, many ephemeral, along the Negev route provided the support network necessary for this caravan traffic during the near two-week journey to Egypt. What, if anything, accompanied the caravaneers returning from Egypt remains unclear. Given a lack of pasturage for raising donkeys in Egypt, it is entirely possible that even the donkeys were sold off once they reached Egypt, much like the Old Assyrian caravan practice in the early second millennium.

"copper corridor" as an early EB IV phenomenon for several reasons. First, there is radiocarbon evidence, albeit limited, which supports an early date (see Finkelstein, Adams, Dunseth, et al. 2018). Second, a continuation of the copper trade during the early EB IV with an inertia of interest by the OK makes more sense than seeing a resurrection of the copper trade and then its near immediate decline at the start of the MBA when maritime trade resumes, allowing access to Cypriot copper and resulting in a settlement pattern aligned with the coastal plain. This is supported by late OK and early FIP parallels for EB IV ceramics from the northern Sinai (see Oren and Yekutieli 1990). Furthermore, a few late OK items also appear among assemblages of Negev sites. Third, the decline of EB IV urban settlements in south-central Transjordan, which surrounded and fed the operation of copper mines, occurs during the late EB IV, and thus represented an end to this system (see D'Andrea 2014b: 234).

[70] Levy, Adams, Hauptmann, et al. 2002.

[71] Stager 1992: 34–41.
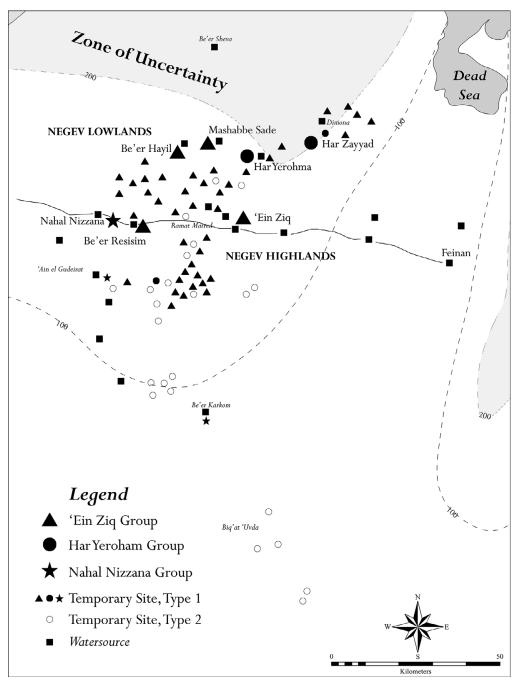
[72] Ben-Yosef, Gidding, Tauxe, et al. 2016.

[73] Haiman 1996; Stager 1992: 41.

[74] Goren 1996.

[75] Oren and Yekutieli 1990.

[76] See Nigro 2014: fig. 1.

2.2 Map of the "copper corridor" through the Negev from the Wadi Feinan in Jordan.
Source: Haiman, 1996:4, fig. 1. Map by Amy Karoll

Nonetheless, in light of this evidence, explanations that emphasize an exclusively pastoral focus for Negev settlements are no longer sustainable.[77]

Outmigration to the Nile Delta provides an additional, if unexplored, avenue for understanding the demographic decline of the southern Levant during the second half of the third millennium. Unlike the data provided for settlement in the northern Levant and northern Mesopotamia, settlement data for the second half of the third millennium for the Egyptian Delta are fundamentally lacking. However, proxy data from various sources, including both the late Old Kingdom (2513–2191 BC) and First Intermediate Period (2190–1991 BC), suggest that Asiatics resided in Egypt in substantial numbers and, furthermore, that some absorption of individuals from the Levant explains this situation. As suggested by the raid of Weni, previously discussed, military engagements with inhabitants of the southern Levant no doubt resulted in prisoners of war taken to Egypt. Tomb paintings at Deshashe and Saqqara depicting assaults on Asiatic settlements during the OK, though the exact whereabouts of these settlements remain unknown, support this.[78] Some of this occurred in connection with the development of naval and maritime, mercantile exploits of the OK, but likewise resulted from the introduction of prisoners of war, craftspersons, guides, and caravaneers.[79] A lack of central authority that marked the FIP is implicated in later traditions for allowing immigration by Asiatics into the Delta, as discussed in the next chapter.

Although we may be tempted to choose from these options, it is very likely that the southern Levant's limited population relocated in light of these circumstances, choosing one or another of these economic vectors and security arrangements. In this reconstruction, each factor exacerbated the others contributing to a radical settlement decline in Canaan during the EB IV. Taken together, however, these distinct trajectories can begin to account for how the region's limited population exploited opportunities before them as they faced political and economic uncertainties within the region. Furthermore, it illustrates the likely economic relationships, principally in mobile labor, that existed between the southern and northern Levant during the second half of the third millennium. All the while, military incursions by Egypt into the southern Levant contributed to a growing class of Asiatic captives dwelling in Egypt. However we may divide the problem among these potential factors, it is unequivocally clear that climatic concerns did not play a significant role in realignments of economies of the Fertile Crescent before the last quarter of the third millennium.

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[77] Cp. Dever 2014: 239–32.
[78] Petrie 1898: pl. IV.
[79] Bietak 2007b: 418–19.

Agropastoral Communities of Practice

The zone of uncertainty would have been little more than a narrow ecological niche in the Levant and Mesopotamia were it not for the archaeological evidence for extensive settlement across this region that hosted such large towns. As noted earlier, settlement growth in the zone of uncertainty between 2500 and 2200 BC represented an unusually large reservoir of agropastoralists exploiting lands throughout the Fertile Crescent's marginal areas. The size of these towns, their multi-century histories, and the presence of comparable institutions such as temples indicate that they were not merely low-density, peripheral waystations, but that their communities shared socioeconomic characteristics that were the product of a distinct historical moment. Although differences between these emerging communities were probably greatest early in the third millennium, immediately after their foundations as agropastoral enclaves by anchor communities like Ebla, Mari, Nawar, Urkesh, and others in the northern Jazira, as the number of their inhabitants grew, so did the frequency of interactions among such communities across this zone.

Their particularly specialized character as agropastoral communities meant that collectively these settlements represented communities of a common trade or practice that regularly interacted along this marginal "frontier" socioeconomic niche. Despite their differences, these communities shared in a moment of historical origin, engaged in a common enterprise, faced similar environmental and socioeconomic conditions, and shared in a common material culture. Although originating in the field of sociology, Etienne Wenger articulates the framework for what he terms "communities of practice" in order to describe practices that result from the collective learning of a community in the "sustained pursuit of an enterprise."[80] This model is particularly applicable in this context because participants are socially engaged in their work communities, which therefore constitute more than simply a workforce with a high degree of specialization, though this would describe certain of their aspects. Rather, within an environment where survival is often the direct result of the successful completion of tasks, social bonds were created and strengthened b ecause of the interdependence of these communities. However, such bonds also result in the construction of boundaries and limitations to social relationships between communities. Although the term is not entirely synonymous with a guild, it is similar in many respects, except that in the context of agropastoral communities the bonds and boundaries between these communities were likely heavily based on kinship, including fictive kinship, and tribal and clan affiliations. Consequently, these communities at

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[80] For these characteristics among others that are shared within communities of practice, see Wenger 1998: esp. 127

the margins constituted a new social entity.[81] In this reconstruction, therefore, agropastoral communities of practice were a cultural product of centuries of settlement extensification in the zone of uncertainty with profound implications for the affiliations, social interactions, and loyalties of these communities.

These communities may have looked materially different, initially, as reflected in the assemblages associated with their varied cultural origins. However, the farther settlement pushed into this marginal region, the less likely such communities were to be dependent for many of their needs on increasingly distant anchor communities, such as Ebla, even if they had played a crucial role in their founding. Instead, the specializations of these communities gradually gave way to degrees of socioeconomic independence. In such a scenario, encounters during their pastoralist activities resulted in the negotiation of boundaries and traditions with neighboring groups. As the later Mari letters reveal, such relationships were, at times, adversarial and thus negotiations of boundaries were an inherent part of this process. Nevertheless, throughout the third quarter of the third millennium BC, social exchanges appear to have permeated early political boundaries between these competing communities, contributing to a blending of traditions that were fundamentally rooted in a common economic enterprise and that were similarly affected by the vagaries of environmental, social, and political changes across the region. It is not difficult to imagine how such encounters also contributed to increasing interdependence on like-minded, economically similar communities, which understood the needs of their neighbors. This interdependence and shared experience, despite their early political affiliations, contributed to a sense of belonging within new "imagined communities."[82]

The emergence of such socioeconomic and political bonds would have posed a threat to the established order, as suggested by the evidence for royal rituals and festivals effectively aimed at retaining political cohesion and control over communities distant from founding centers such as Ebla. As these new agropastoral settlements grew and became home to smaller communities with wider regional ties of their own, Ebla and its peers seem to have made efforts to tie themselves more closely to their vassals and their territorial claims. Ebla, for instance, appears to have done so, at least in part, through a series of sacred journeys and pilgrimages made by its rulers to various towns throughout the

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[81] Although wedded to traditional articulations of the sedentarization of pastoralists, a somewhat analogous notion has been articulated by Giorgio Buccellati concerning the "perceptual geography" that may be at the roots of Amorite identity around the Middle Euphrates, namely, their identity as a social class of "peasants." In this model, Amorite was even conceived of as a "rural counterpart of urban Akkadian/Eblaite" (Buccellati 1990: 102–3).

[82] With reference to "imagined communities" and Amorites, see Porter 2012: 57.

kingdom.[83] Among these was, of course, the occasional coronation ritual.[84] However, more regular venerations of deceased kings and ancestors were also significant. These efforts added to the economic ties that existed between these communities and their founders, such as Ebla, Banat, Nawar, and Mari, by creating complex social and cultic networks that created interlaced economic, political, and ritual landscapes. The integration in the various festivals of different deities such as Kura, Barama, and ʾAdabal, some of whose cult centers were outside Ebla, meant that status was also accorded to many of the towns in Ebla's territories. While the names of most of Ebla's frontier towns remain uncertain, there is no reason to doubt that comparable efforts were directed at the integration of these communities within Ebla's social and political domain as they grew in size and economic power. The *très long mur* may be one physical expression of such efforts.

EARLY AMORITE IDENTITY

Identifying the communities inhabiting agropastoral settlements in the zone of uncertainty as Amorite or, for that matter, with any other label available is a fraught affair. For example, it may give the impression that such labels were employed consistently at an early date or at least consistently enough that their referents were understood within and between the groups who used them. However, labels such as Amorite were not only potentially multi-valent, they could be variously employed or adopted and they were also subject to diachronic change. This may have been the case from the perspective of Eblaites in the west and Akkadians and Sumerians in the south. As discussed earlier, the labels were imposed very often by southern Mesopotamia's inhabitants, the Akkadians and Sumerians, two labels which in and of themselves are also difficult to explicate beyond linguistic and geographic bounds. In recognizing this as an etic perspective we arrive, perhaps, at one of the means by which ethnogenesis can be suggested to occur, namely etic deployment of labels for communities, which may conceal or complicate identifying emic understandings. In this case, we are fairly certain that mar-tu was the label often used by non-mar-tu Sumerians and later Akkadians to refer to groups, certainly in the plural, who inhabited at least, though perhaps not exclusively, regions to the northwest of southern Mesopotamia. Whether or not the term was a borrowed local term by the mid-third millennium is, at present, impossible to establish. Group labels are, however, also occasionally appropriated by the labeled group, and thus, in an ironic twist, they may be deployed to form a banner under which a group might seek to identify itself. Both processes can

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[83] Ristvet 2011; Ristvet 2014: 68–74.
[84] Ristvet 2014: 40–42.

yield an origin of an ethnic or labeled identity group.[85] Ethnic affiliations, as the use of the Greek term *ethnos* implies, were first and foremost geopolitical designations, permitting the placement of groups within a popular, if simplified, sociopolitical geography. Excepting the possible presence of small enclaves of Akkadians from the south, the prevalent groups in northern Mesopotamia are identified as Subareans, Hurrians, and Amorites, though groups of Amorites could be found as far east as Umma and Susa as well as Hurrians at Nippur.[86] In this section an attempt is made to work within the constraints provided by the textual localization of Amorites in order to articulate evidence for social structures of early Amorite communities and the potential that such an understanding yields for identifying Amorites in the archaeological records of Mesopotamia and the Levant.

Ascribed Identities and Tribal Constituencies

From a southern Mesopotamian perspective, Amorites were "westerners" as the name mar-tu (Akk. *amurru*) reveals, in a fashion analogous to that of the Subareans or "northerners," who were located to the north. In this respect, Amurru and Subartu occupied prominent, idealized positions within a Mesopotamian sociopolitical geography, certainly by the reign of Naram-Sin, as embodied in the title "king of the four quarters," which in addition to these two included Elam and Akkad.[87] However, in actuality such geographic labels mask social and kinship structures within these populations. Indeed, there is evidence that we should seek local tribal identities for Amorites during the third millennium, as with other third millennium groups. The name Tidnum, for example, already occurs as da-da-nu^{ki} in the Ebla texts (pre-2350 BC), where mar-tu are already referenced, and its use as a geographic term appears during the reign of Gudea of the Second Dynasty of Lagash (2150–2112 BC), yet its use was restricted mostly to the Ur III (2112–2004 BC).[88] The mar-tu appear alongside references to Tidnum^{KI} (Sum. lumma) and Yamʾadium^{KI}, who were allied in battle against Ur III forces. Occurrences, for example, from Shu-Sin's reign suggest that at least Martu, Tidnum, and Yamʾadium, originally constituted as separate identities, presumably tribal,[89] came to be collectively regarded as Amorite. Although our sources are thin for discussing Amorite identity before the Ur III, we are on safe ground to suggest that, insofar as a collective identity or an imposed ethnic identity existed by virtue of eastern sources, Amorite identity constituted a supra-tribal collective.

[85] Collar 2018: 104.
[86] Westenholz 1999: 95–97.
[87] Hallo 1980: 189–90.
[88] Michalowski 2011: 112–13.
[89] *RIME* 3/2.1.4.1.

In light of what we know of tribal structures, they are usually further divisible into clans, larger extended family groups, whether or not these groupings also include fictive kinship relations. Because tribes were larger they usually inhabited entire regions, and as smaller units clans often inhabited villages, towns, or quarters within larger towns or cities.[90] Thus the label mar-tu as applied to westerners in Mesopotamian literature of the second half of the third millennium lumped together individual tribes and their clans, who were members of a number of different communities across northern Mesopotamia, while permitting the coexistence and comingling of other groups such as Hurrians and Subareans across a region that effectively had no significant geographic boundaries. Thus to some extent, our definitions, which are largely a product of the limited references to different groups, are often inflexible. Because of the potential for changes to their constituencies, identities such as Amorite were inherently malleable both to those ascribing them and the ascribed, and they were adapted to changing sociopolitical circumstances. In this respect, the label mar-tu/*amurru* may have functioned as an ethnic label from the southern Mesopotamian perspective, signaling an identity greater than the tribe, a geographic, supra-tribal identity, alongside broad identities such as Sumerian and Akkadian that are increasingly recognized as masking subtler group affiliations.[91]

In this context, the archaeology of agropastoral communities of practice – when taken together with all of the other data we possess – provides a reasonable means by which to further refine our understandings of the origins of various groups across northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant during the second half of the third millennium BC. Where these communities are not otherwise identifiable through material culture and textual references as explicitly belonging to an identity *other* than Amorite, as for example Subarean or Hurrian in the case of places such as Nawar (Tell Brak) and Urkesh (Tell Mozan), it may be reasonable to conclude that various tribes were collectively identified as Amorite. While the label's Akkadian meaning suggests that it originated from a southern Mesopotamian perspective, the use of the term by regional powers, as in the case of Ebla, suggests that by the mid-third millennium the term had perhaps already gained other significance in different places. While this circumscription cannot yet be fully articulated, the evidence available serves as a basis for postulating that many of the cultural traditions evidenced in the archaeological records of these agropastoral communities may be identified with early Amorite communities that emerged from the Fertile Crescent's populations. The archaeology of settlements across northern

[90] Schloen 2001: 150–65.
[91] Adams 1966: 85–86.
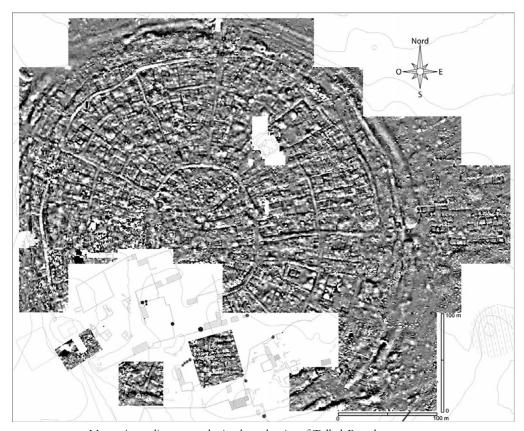
Mesopotamia and the northern Levant, therefore, allows us an opportunity to reconsider how our applications of these terms may be better nuanced.

Shared Traditions and Boundary Maintenance among Early Amorite Communities

As discussed earlier, settlement extensification in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant during the first half of the third millennium is suggested as a parallel, contemporaneous phenomenon to southern Levantine settlement expansion, even though the latter proved unsustainable. While both of these initiatives manifestly focused on different ecological niches, their economic expansions point to the rapid growth of urban settlements in both regions during the third millennium. In the northern Levant, the economic activities associated with Amorites, as in the Ebla texts, and the principal localization of Amorite groups throughout the western half of the zone of uncertainty suggest that efforts to understand Amorite identity in this period must address the cultural traditions among settlements that can be reasonably identified with Amorite communities.

In this section it is suggested that closer examination of archaeological contexts of agropastoral communities and the neighboring settlements with which they interacted reveals material correlates for the identification of a constellation of shared traditions that point to an emerging cultural framework shared by Amorite communities. To be clear, this material culture was not, from its origins, uniquely Amorite, since Amorite identity seems to have been actively under construction during the mid–third millennium from the region's existing cultural traditions. Rather, the association of Amorites with the cultural traditions of these early communities expose the manner by which many of these traditions came to be common among later Amorite communities. These include shared traditions in monument construction, namely town planning, fortification architecture, temple design, and the erection of standing stones or monumental stelae, but also burial customs, sacrificial traditions, and other forms of material culture discussed here. The elements associated with these traditions, in particular, large urban centers of substantial "size, monumentality, and complexity" point toward the emergence of "a sort of 'cultural *koiné*'" around the Middle Euphrates and the western Jazira,[92] although one that was likely even more widespread across northern Mesopotamia and the Levant than has been previously suggested. These traditions correlate with the shaping of customs around expectations for rulers, approaches to the art of warfare, and the marking of status by members of these communities.

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[92] Finkbeiner et al. 2015b: 435.

2.3 Magnetic gradient map obtained on the site of Tell al-Rawda.
(Castel et al. in press). Note city wall, buildings, roads, and temples. Reproduced courtesy of
Corinne Castel. © Franco-Syrian Archaeological Mission of Tell al-Rawda

To begin with, the plans and defenses of agropastoral settlements during the
mid-third millennium throughout this region were likely a product of their
sudden establishment and recognized need to accommodate substantial
growth. Nevertheless, the conceptual organization of these settlements argu-
ably contributed to a shared sense of the organization of space within later
urban settlements inhabited by Amorites. These towns were monumental
undertakings that appear to have been established in a fairly short period of
time, probably one generation, though they seem to have been planned to
accommodate substantial growth. Settlements inside the *très long mur*, for
example, represent perhaps the most mature realization of settlement density
possible within such communities. Geoprospection of the town plans of
al-Rawda and Sh'airat reveal the density of these settlements (Figure 2.3).[93]
Concentric roads define rings of settlement radiating from the center out,
through which roads from their centers led toward their gates, as at al-Rawda.

[93] Gondet and Castel 2004; Georges 2016: 95, fig. 4.

In some locations, as around the Jebel Abd al-Aziz in the Jazira, environmental, socioeconomic, or political conditions likely cut short the development of these settlements, and thus they represent unrealized potential or failed efforts in settlement extensification, much like the failed experiments in urbanism of the southern Levant. In light of the Levantine examples, vast areas of open space within the boundaries of some settlements north of the Euphrates appear to represent uninhabited space within these nascent towns.

A major element in the original planning of these settlements was the erection of defensive walls that enclosed them and gave them their circular layouts.[94] Their defenses centered on a fortification wall but also could include earthen ramparts, defensive ditches, and outer revetments. Such elements, as much as the overall plan, are also attested among the anchor communities out of which they likely sprang, such as Tell Chuera (Abarsal?),[95] Urkesh (Tell Mozan), Ebla (Tell Mardikh), and Mari (Tell Harriri). Although the plan of Ebla's MBA fortifications is much better understood and more conspicuous, this is largely because the later fortifications were constructed atop those of the late third millennium, which originated during the mid-third millennium, shaping Ebla's layout in successive periods. In a very tangible way, the fortified enclosures of these communities bring to the fore the significance of the metaphor of Uruk as "sheepfold" in the Gilgamesh Epic.

> He built the rampart of Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
>   of holy Eanna, the sacred storehouse.
> See its wall like a strand of *wool*,
>   view its parapet that none could copy![96]
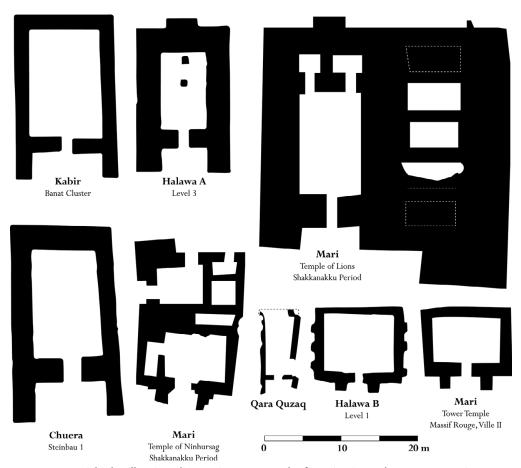
These walls kept would-be aggressors out, while protecting the wealth of these communities, particularly when sheep were present to be counted and plucked.[97] Together these features therefore attest to the centralized planning involved in their establishment and likewise expose the material and cultural connection between nascent communities in the zone of uncertainty and the "mother" settlements from which they sprang.

In terms of the division of space within these communities, some divergence from the classic Sumerian urban model may be suggested. As seen at al-Rawda, for example, there is no evident focus on the concentration of temples and monumental architecture on the acropolis. Instead, temples are prominent features within certain quarters and these temples belong to a plan known as the *in antis* temple type (Figures 2.4 and 2.5).[98] The appearance of this temple

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[94] Burke 2008: 198–204.
[95] Archi 1993b: 89–91.
[96] George 2003: 1.
[97] Sheep were not shorn but plucked during the Early Bronze Age; see Breniquet 2014.
[98] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 216–17, 51; Sala 2010.
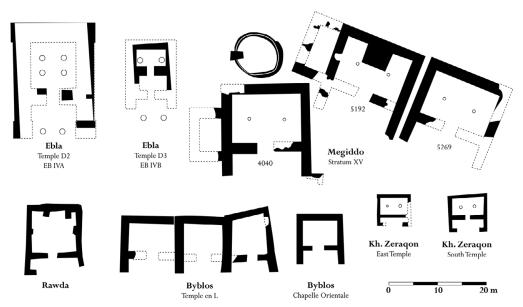
2.4 Third-millennium direct-axis *in antis* temples from sites in northern Mesopotamia. Illustration by Amy Karoll

type represents a distinct process in the selection of types for monumental sacred architecture and marks a significant departure from southern Mesopotamian traditions, where there is no evidence for its introduction before the very end of the third millennium. The ziqqurat, on the one hand, is not present in northern Mesopotamia and, on the other hand, Sumerian temples were entirely dissimilar, with a preference for non-symmetrical design and often indirect access to the sanctuary's "holy of holies." In the Levant, from the fourth to the third millennium the dominant type had been the so-called broadroom type, with a single doorway located in its longest side, necessitating a right-angle turn upon entry.[99] This earlier temple type was not only different in its orientation, it also could not accommodate wide interior spaces. The broad room was roofed with shorter, locally available

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[99] Kempinski 1992: 53–58.

2.5 Third-millennium direct-axis *in antis* temples in the Levant.
Illustration by Amy Karoll

timbers of a few meters in length, as revealed by the dimensions of these buildings. Temples throughout Mesopotamia, before the introduction of the temple *in antis*, were dominated by complex buildings in which the deity was sequestered at the rear of a series of rooms that resembled a home.[100] However, with the *in antis* plan, the deity's sanctuary or home now resembled a throne room approached directly, under the full gaze of the deity. The direct alignment of the doorway with the *dais* located at the rear of the temple *in antis*, where the image of the deity was located, marked a major shift in the conceptual understanding of access to the divine. Unfortunately, it is often impossible to provide definitive identifications for the deities worshiped in these third millennium temples. In addition, the origins of this building type in proximity to available timber resources in the Levant and Anatolia make clear its foreignness to southern Mesopotamia where it would become popular during the MBA.

Other differences are also notable. Concerning comparisons of third-millennium temples in northern and southern Mesopotamia, Gil Stein observes that northern temples were "distinct in architecture, location, and function" playing "a different, economic and ideological role." He connects this with the observation that "North Mesopotamian urban centers do not

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[100] It is quite possible that the fourth-millennium antecedent of the *in antis* temple type is to be found in the tripartite buildings of the Uruk period, an architectural plan that served both domestic architecture and, by extension of analogy, as the "house of the god." See Butterlin 2015.

seem to have developed from an earlier base of temple-centered towns," with a more limited ideological role that was "overshadowed by the palace sector."[101] While this is true with respect to centralization, the dispersed locations of these temples within these communities may also point to the location of such temples with respect to individual quarters, which may be identified with distinct social groupings, namely tribes or clans. The location of these temples is likely, therefore, a significant reflection of the cultic orientations of the groups inhabiting the surrounding quarter. If this is the case, this may provide a context for understanding OB and later references to the so-called gods of the fathers, wherein they reflect the roots of cultic practices at the clan level and thus of the clan's association with temples situated in these communities.

That the foundations of many northern cities were much later than their southern counterparts would also have meant a different cultic role for northern Mesopotamian temples. The accessible nature, as evidenced in their locations – throughout the lower city and not exclusively in the center – and their direct-axis alignment, reveal a new perspectives on the relationship to the divine, certainly less removed from individuals and possibly regarded as more approachable. The relationship between the temple building tradition of northern Mesopotamia beginning in the third millennium and that of the Levant from the late third millennium therefore suggests a relationship not only in architectural traditions but also potentially in certain religious traditions.
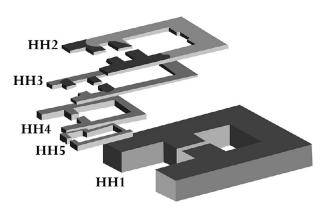
Among communities in the zone of uncertainty in northern Mesopotamia where this sanctuary type has been identified from as early as the first half of the third millennium were Chuera, Kabir, Halawa, and Qara Quzaq, but also Mari to the south (Figure 2.4).[102] Mari was a notable exception, being the most southern of settlements featuring this temple type before the Ur III. Several sanctuaries in Mari conform to early versions of this temple type during the Shakkanakku Period.[103] The temple *in antis* type did not develop, however, within settlements at the limits of agropastoralism but, as the earliest exemplars indicate, in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant at sites such as Tell Chuera and Ebla,[104] the anchor communities most likely to have been responsible for founding many of the smaller settlements in the steppe at which the direct-axis temple type appears.

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[101] Stein 2004: 75–76.
[102] Novák 2015: 61–67; Orthmann, Klein, Kühne, et al. 1995: fig. 5; Meyer and Orthmann 2013: 156–57, fig. 60; Pfälzner 2011a: 183–87; Porter 1995: 126–31, figs. 3, 8; Meyer and Hempelmann 2013: 170–71, fig. 64; Strommenger, Schneiders, Rittig, et al. 1986: 118, 30, fig. 16.
[103] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 286.
[104] Pfälzner 2011a: 183–87.

2.6 Continuous sequence of direct-axis *in antis* temples excavated in Area HH, the so-called Temple of the Rock, at Ebla.
Source: Matthiae 2007: 489, fig. 6. Illustration by Amy Karoll

In the northern Levant, examples of the *in antis* temple type occur at Ebla, al-Rawda, Sh'airat, and Byblos (Figure 2.5). A series of five temples spanning the mid-third to second millennium were excavated in Area HH at Ebla, exposing the evolution of this type (Figure 2.6).[105] The so-called Temple of the Rock reveals that these structures establish a direct link between the direct-axis temple tradition of the third millennium and those of the MBA. Other third millennium temples at Ebla, such as the Red Temple (D2), further illustrate this continuity (Figure 2.5). This temple type is also attested at al-Rawda, which possessed temples *in antis* and standing stones (stelae) within the associated precinct.[106] Geophysics at Tell Sh'airat also identified a temple *in antis* on the western side of the upper town measuring 9.5 × 7 m.[107] At Byblos, a series of three side-by-side temples of the *in antis* type are located in the so-called Temple in L complex, while the Chapelle orientale preserves an *in antis* temple of almost ten meters on a side, and still other smaller variants are attested in the Sanctuaire meridional and the Temple sud-ouest (Figure 2.5).[108]

In the southern Levant, mid-third millennium exemplars of the direct-axis type are also present at Megiddo and Khirbet ez-Zeraqon (Figure 2.5). Changes in the cultic area between Strata XVII and XV during the second quarter of the third millennium at Megiddo suggest the gradual introduction of this temple type, as the temples – at their core – resemble the broadroom type but with *antae* added in what appears to be an accommodation to this new style.[109] Megiddo Stratum XV preserves three temples, probably to be dated to the first century or so of the EB IV (2500–2400 BC), based on a recently

[105] Matthiae 2006b; Matthiae 2007: 488; Matthiae 2013d: 188–89, figs. 75–79.
[106] Castel and Peltenburg 2007; Castel 2010; Castel 2011.
[107] Georges 2016: 79.
[108] Sala 2014: 39–42.
[109] Adams 2017a: 502–8.

redated foundation deposit from Temple 4040.[110] Temples 4040, 5192, and 5269, all of which reveal the temple *in antis* plan, were constructed within the existing cultic area of the first half of the third millennium.[111] Its builders even left intact the enormous stone altar with steps, which, in a final phase, was enclosed by a wall behind Temple 4040, as if to convey the supersession of older cultic traditions by means of the construction of the new temple.

Standing stones (Ar. *menhir*), as mentioned earlier, are a central element among some of these cultic sanctuaries, as well as across the Levantine landscape in northern Canaan and Jordan during the EB III and IV from about 2850 BC.[112] While their precise function is not always clear and therefore much debated, there is little doubt that they functioned as monumental commemorations, whether for marking ancestors, territories, treaties, burials, or serving as witnesses before the gods in temple precincts. In Jordan's highlands, they are prolific in the third millennium landscape, but they also appear among sites such as Ader, Bab edh-Dhra', al-Lajjun, Iskander, Hajr Mansub, and 'Aroer. Standing stones in temple precincts, which for this reason might be distinguished as *betyls*, appear in the northern Levant at Byblos, al-Rawda, and Qarqur, and in Mari within the courtyard of the Temple of Ninni–zaza within contexts of the mid-to-late third millennium.[113] In the southern Levant west of the Jordan River, other examples from the EB IV include those from Tel 'Ashir.[114] The abundance of these monuments in northern Mesopotamia and especially the Levant in the third millennium suggests the importance of the employment of stones in the commemoration of locations and events in the region's traditions, which continues into the second millennium. That they were only introduced to southern Mesopotamia during the Akkadian Period, in the likes of the stelae of Naram-Sin and Manishtushu, is suggestive of the role the west played in transmitting this tradition to the south, where stone was not available for such monuments.

Mortuary customs, like town planning, fortifications, and temple architecture, also reveal common traditions among agropastoral communities during the mid-third millennium across northern Mesopotamia and the Levant. A number of different burial traditions are attested throughout the Jazira, Middle Euphrates Valley, and in the Levant during the first half of the third millennium. Many of these persisted after 2500 BC, including shaft tombs, which were prevalent in the Levant,[115] pit and cist burials, and shaft chambers. Hypogea featuring built chambers were also sometimes constructed into

[110] Adams 2017b.
[111] Aharoni 1993: 1006–7.
[112] Sala 2014: 41; Ben-Ami 2008; Richard 2014: 341; Prag 2014: 396.
[113] Castel 2011; Maxime and Michel 2011.
[114] Gophna and Ayalon 2004; Ben-Ami 2008.
[115] Mazar 1990: 159–61.

tumuli in the Middle Euphrates region,[116] where pit and cist burials exist alongside smaller numbers of shaft and chamber tombs.[117]

The variety attested among mortuary practices of the period is arguably a reflection, to some extent, of the varied cultural traditions represented across the region, given the conservatism typically witnessed among burial customs. They may expose the smaller tribal and clan-level affiliations of members of these mixed communities across the region. While the persistence of burial customs, such as pit burials, until the third quarter of the third millennium in northern Mesopotamia is significant in accounting for continuity in burial customs, the introduction of new burial types with distinct distributions during the mid-third millennium may be indicative of the presence of – or formation of – other cultural identities in the region. During the late third millennium, shaft tombs appear to be prevalent among agropastoral communities and likewise noteworthy because this type persists during the MBA in Mesopotamia and the Levant. Elisabeth Cooper has also observed that there is a significant distinction between the use of cist graves north of Banat (ancient Armi?) along the Euphrates, while earth and rock-cut shaft tombs predominate from Banat south, and she suggests therefore a possible correlation between shaft burials and Amorite groups.[118] Although there is considerable mixture of burial types along the entire stretch of the Middle Euphrates, particularly among simple pit burials, the boundary articulated by shaft and cist graves does seem culturally significant. It is tempting, therefore, to suggest that it reflects the intersection of Subarean burial practices, which are more common to the north of Banat, as perhaps reflected in cist burials, and Amorite practices, which persist in use of shaft graves in the late third and early second millennium in the Levant and that are located south of Banat on the Euphrates. A further association of pithos burials with sites mostly north of Banat, while chamber tombs seem more common to the south, may reveal additional evidence of a cultural boundary evident in burial customs.

Stone-built, corbel-vaulted burial chambers, sometimes called hypogea, appear to have been introduced during the third quarter of the third millennium, sometimes within tumuli (i.e., burial mounds) or cairns. These are seen at Middle Euphrates settlements such as Jerablus Tahtani, Banat, Tawi, Tell Ahmar, and Gre Virike.[119] The construction of a hypogeum on Ebla's acropolis has been attributed to the last of its rulers just before its destruction; prior to this Ebla's archives point to royal burials in towns to Ebla's west.[120]

[116] Bouso 2015: 373–78.
[117] Valentini 2011: 267–70.
[118] Cooper 2006: 243–47, 49.
[119] Finkbeiner, Novák, Sakal, et al. 2015b: 435.
[120] Matthiae 2013f: 50.

The Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar could likely be included among these built chamber tombs as well.[121] These structural tombs find parallels in built tombs of the later "residential funerary chambers" of the MBA. The practice was not entirely restricted to the Euphrates Valley, as the burial ground at Umm el-Marra to the west can be identified with the hypogeum tradition. If burial mounds located within and adjacent to the Euphrates Valley are, indeed, reflective of mobile pastoralists whose home communities were located here,[122] then they functioned analogously to intramural residential burials for sedentary communities. In this vein, it is interesting to note that extramural burial mounds play no role around settled communities outside of the Euphrates Valley in the zone of uncertainty during the third millennium.

The cultural boundary between northern and southern traditions that has been identified in the Middle Euphrates Valley at Banat appears to be significant in the Jazira as well, where pit and cist burials seem ubiquitous. Shaft and chamber tombs, however, occur predominantly in the southern half of the Khabur. Yet at Tell Mozan, for example, which was Hurrian controlled, neither shaft nor chamber tombs are attested.[123] Thus, the north-south interface between what may be Amorite and Hurrian zones in the Middle Euphrates, centering perhaps on Banat, seems to have stretched across a comparable latitude line across the Jazira to the east. In this analysis, the conspicuous massive tumuli of Tell Banat are effectively unique and thereby constitute outliers in these traditions that cannot be evidently linked to other contemporaneous or later burial customs, except perhaps for the hypogea built into their cores,[124] which might be taken as predecessors of the plans of MBA royal burial complexes. Indeed, Peltenburg notes that competition among elites was already intensively underway in northern Mesopotamia, as also revealed among these burial traditions.[125] He observes that "settlement increasingly gathered around mortuary facilities where leaders could maintain ceremonial connections to their real or fictive ancestors." Therefore, to the extent that these structures are viewed as unique, this may be because of their location along this cultural boundary, while exposing that burial traditions reveal a negotiation of identity that does not exhibit "regional uniformity."

The location of royal burial crypts below a royal dwelling or palace is in evidence at Ebla, in the northern Levant. Like the shaft burials to which they are most closely related, they are also clearly forebears of MBA royal hypogea. The royal burials at Ebla were evidently located in Hypogeum G4 below

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[121] Cooper 2006: 230–32; Baccarin 2014.
[122] Porter 2002b; Porter 2002a.
[123] Valentini 2011: 286, pl. 8.
[124] Cooper 2006: 227–30.
[125] Peltenburg 2008: 233–38.

Palace G, which functioned until its destruction ca. 2350 BC.[126] Following similar principles was the Hypogeum at Tell Ahmar along the Middle Euphrates north of Banat, which was apparently situated below a building complex, and possibly part of a number of such structures. It was a monumental, rectangular (5 × 3 m) stone-built tomb with a slightly corbel-vaulted ceiling constructed of stone slabs raised 2 m above its stone-paved floor. Two adults accompanied by numerous sheep-goat bones were interred with 1,045 vessels.[127] Although royal burials of this period among agropastoral communities are not yet attested (with the possible exception of Banat), the sites mentioned earlier were within the cultural orbit of nearby Amorite communities and reveal the cultural traditions that influenced Amorite traditions, which are in evidence among second millennium centers under Amorite rule.

In addition to prototypes of Amorite royal burials, several other burial practices may also reflect early Amorite burial practices. Throughout the Jazira and along the Middle Euphrates, infants, for example, were usually interred in ceramic burials within residences.[128] While not unique in their own right, nor exclusive to this period since the tradition can be traced back to the Neolithic Period, they nonetheless become a characteristic and highly conservative element of later burial traditions among Amorite communities and bear some unique expressions among local traditions. Cooking pots, for example, were used in the Middle Euphrates region for infant burials through the end of the third millennium,[129] a practice that continued in the northern Levant during the MBA. Nevertheless, an analogous treatment of infant burials across a broad region, alongside other burial types, points to a gradual shift toward residential burial of infant remains.[130]

More extensive considerations of burial data may expose tighter correlations between burial practices and various groups inhabiting the region, albeit still challenged by the dearth of textual data from which to draw labels for their affiliation with certain groups. Nevertheless, a degree of separation between burial customs suggest habitation by different groups, whether tribes or clans of Hurrians, Subareans, or Amorites, among unnamed others. The important point remains, however, that movement of inhabitants from within this and the adjacent steppe regions would have effected the transfer of many of the traditions prevalent across this region to the locations into which these inhabitants relocated, as discussed later.

Given the broader bases for cultural affinities across the region, it is of little surprise that less monumental aspects of material culture exhibit similarities as

[126] Matthiae 1995: 656–57; Matthiae 2013h.
[127] Cooper 2006: 230–32.
[128] Valentini 2011: 270; Cooper 2006: 212.
[129] Bouso 2015: 390–91.
[130] See also Matney 2018.

well. Artistic styles of seals and statuary share characteristics across the northern Levant and northern Mesopotamia, suggestive of the extent of interactions between these regions in the mid-third millennium.[131] Pillar-shaped figurines, which are common from Hadidi to Bi'a, for example, are well attested in the northern Levant and down the Euphrates Valley to Mari.[132] Later, second millennium mural traditions may even find their origins within the third millennium, particularly along the Middle Euphrates where such paintings in various contexts have been recovered at Qara Quzaq, Halawa B, Sweyhat, and Munbaqa.[133]

Given the steppic locations of agropastoral communities of the Fertile Crescent, the high socioeconomic value placed on equids was culturally expressed through their sacrifice and their interment with elites. Third-millennium exemplars of equid burials in communities across the zone of uncertainty are attested at the sites of Umm el-Marra, Halawa, Tell Bi'a (Tuttul), Banat, Abu Hamad, Tell Brak, and Tell Beydar.[134] Evidence for onager exploitation at Umm el-Marra is in line with traditional perceptions of pastoralist and steppe-based economic activities of Amorites.[135] The reappearance of equid burials within the zone of uncertainty at the southern end of the southern Levant during the last part of the MBA was located within the same steppic zone in which its precursors occur, which have otherwise been difficult to relate through time to one another. Fundamentally, however, the burials of equids from Brak to Umm el-Marra and later in the southern Levant expose the association of this practice with the zone of uncertainty, within which the capture and rearing of such animals was an element of a robust regional economy. The identification of Amorites with equids, notably those other than horses, may therefore have been one of self-differentiation in the years after their abandonment of marginal zones, as they sought to maintain cultural separation from other groups, such as Subareans and later Hurrians in the north. Hurrians were later known for their facilities with horses (*Equus caballus*) in the mid-second millennium and even produced a horse-training manual preserved among Hittite texts.[136] As echoed in an OB Mari letter, later Amorite associations with donkeys as a means of royal conveyance may have as much to do with familiar elements of their environment as with a cultural rejection of the practices of rival neighbors. During the third millennium, the associations of Amorites and equids appear to have included both onagers and donkeys but not horses.

[131] Felli 2015: 231.
[132] Finkbeiner, Novák, Sakal, et al. 2015b: 436.
[133] For overviews, see Meyer 2013: 173–74; Felli 2015: 210, pl. 4; Holland 2001.
[134] Way 2010: 223–24.
[135] Weber 2006; Weber 2008; Nichols and Weber 2006.
[136] See Potralz 1938.

In an attempt to further constrain our identification of Amorite communities, their place among settlements in the zone of uncertainty can be set against the identification of other groups with specific sites in the region. The occurrence of distinct practices at these sites that are not in evidence among those sites at which Amorite communities are suggested serves as an important criterion for clarifying not just what customs were a part of Amorite identity, but also what practices were not embraced by Amorite communities and vice versa. As already noted earlier, the presence and absence of particular burial customs around the Middle Euphrates serves as a potentially important element in identifying a range of distinct burial traditions that may be identified with Amorite communities or their neighbors. Given the limited evidence for Gutians and Elamites, Subareans or, more specifically, Hurrians provide the clearest evidence for attempts to maintain such cultural boundaries.

To date, the primary evidence for cultural separation between Amorites and Hurrians is linguistic, although communities such as Urkesh (Tell Mozan) also provide other grounds for the identification of a distinct Hurrian culture.[137] Hurrians, for example, first appear in texts from the late Akkadian Empire.[138] Various lines of evidence such as seals, palace architecture, and burial customs point to a distinct Hurrian tradition.[139] Nevertheless, other data suggest that southward movements of Hurrian social groups into Mesopotamia were limited during the second half of the third millennium. First, as with Subareans, only a handful of Hurrian names are attested in southern Mesopotamian texts. Second, the identification of sites of predominantly Hurrian affiliation during the third millennium is contained to the most northern parts of Mesopotamia, just shy of the mountains of southern Anatolia. Towns such as Urkesh (Tell Mozan) and Nawar (Tell Brak), for example, are among the few that show onomastic and cultural evidence, such as seals, exhibiting Hurrian affiliations.[140] Third, the so-called Early Transcaucasian Culture (ETC) that appears in the Levant during the second quarter of the third millennium (2750–2500 BC), spreading out of Anatolia and down the Great Rift Valley as far as northern Israel, experienced almost no downstream advance along the Euphrates. Very little evidence for the ceramic wares associated with the domestic contexts of ETC groups appears in the Middle Euphrates, and it is in such limited quantities that asserting any real presence of associated groups is difficult. The evident cultural divide between northern and southern burial traditions that is seen around Tell Banat, as

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[137] Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1997; Steinkeller 1998; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002b.
[138] Westenholz 1999: 95–96.
[139] Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1997.
[140] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 284–85.

discussed earlier, may help identify a rough cultural boundary between tribal affiliates of both groups. South of Banat, shaft graves are more similar to traditions of the late third millennium and MBA that are attested in the Levant, while north of it along the Euphrates cist graves are present. Since these types do not overlap in their regional distribution but are also not the only burial custom at these sites, the correlation is suggestive of an approximate boundary between Hurrian and Amorite cultural zones. Thus, it seems likely that flight of Hurrian groups from the zone of uncertainty would have taken many of them predominantly northward into southern Anatolia, where their social and kinship networks originated. By contrast, Amorites moved to regions proximate to the west, east, and south, as discussed in the next chapter.

In aggregate, archaeological data do facilitate the identification of numerous agropastoral settlements in the zone of uncertainty and the customs witnessed therein as those of early Amorite communities. The largest of these sedentary communities reveal economies founded on the exploitation of the steppe through pastoralist and hunting activities but engaging in agriculture for the subsistence of their inhabitants. Communities that were also located along trade routes within this zone may have prospered in particularly acute ways. The location of those along the Euphrates River guaranteed that they remained inhabited in the aftermath of the region's climatic decline. The agropastoral towns that were founded at the extreme limits of the zone's habitable area exhibit a level of planning and construction that is difficult to describe as other than monumental, revealing an intention by anchor communities such as Ebla and Mari to extensively exploit this environmental niche within their hinterlands. However, because most of these newly founded communities were effectively isolated, like frontier settlements, new configurations of earlier traditions emerged. A decentralization of cult, as might be indicated by the dispersal of temples of the *in antis* tradition, suggests that rather than a central priestly authority, as was typical in southern Mesopotamia, these communities rallied around tribal or clan-based cultic traditions, while adopting a relatively simple temple type. Indeed, the *in antis* temple plan again exposes the embracing of a monumentality that would have been particularly conspicuous across the plains of northern Mesopotamia and the Levant while also facilitating accessibility by means of its layout.

As in life, so in death, monumentality informed the choices of burial traditions, particularly in the construction of hypogea, whether buried within the tumuli of Banat or Umm el-Marra, or under buildings at Ebla and Tell Ahmar. These long-lived traditions served as archetypes for the burial customs of emergent Amorite elites, while shaft graves, in particular, typified a not inconsiderable investment in burial by emerging elites when traditional pit burials had been previously ubiquitous. Minor variations among some of the seemingly similar burial customs may reflect differences in tribal traditions.

The economic context of these communities may be the leading factor in the occasional, if unique, treatments of equids in burial customs that are attested at some of these communities. Cultural preferences informed not only the adoption of particular burial and sacrificial customs, but also the rejection of the practices of neighboring groups such the Hurrians, which are attested, for example, in the northern parts of the Jazira but absent to the south and in most of the Levant.

CRISES IN THE ZONE OF UNCERTAINTY

The sustainability of settlements in the Fragile Crescent was dependent on stability in two areas affecting the social and economic lives of agropastoral communities: the political climate and the environment. Support by political centers permitted the risk-laden endeavor of founding and maintaining settlements in these marginal zones, providing markets for goods, and military defense by inclusion within kingdoms such as Ebla and Mari. At the margins, only limited resources were available to invest in the active defense of these communities. Passive efforts such as the construction of fortifications required upfront investments but relatively little thereafter, particularly over the long term, and the lengthy histories of these communities suggest that the returns on the investment of energy required in their establishment were worthwhile. However, if geopolitical circumstances – such as the types of conflicts attested between Ebla and Mari during the mid-third millennium – subjected these regions to military incursions, the economic viability of these communities was jeopardized. The same held true concerning their environmental stability. A few years of drought, just like protracted conflict, would have made habitation of these already marginal communities untenable. It is unsurprising, therefore, that shortly after 2200 BC, after years of sustained military intervention followed by the sudden onset of aridification, the majority of settlements within the most arid portions of the zone of uncertainty were rapidly abandoned.

Early Military Intervention, ca. 2500–2300 BC

Conflict and warfare played a central role in the formation of local identities in northern Mesopotamia and in the northern Levant from the mid-third millennium BC. Despite the attention given to Akkadian interest in the west, its aspirations were not unique. The region had been subject to incursions by southern Mesopotamian kings since at least the reign of Lugalzagesi (2350 BC), even if we cannot be certain that such incursions reflect sustained military activity or an administrative presence in the region, as was later the case with the Akkadian Empire. Lugalzagesi claims to have campaigned to the Upper

Sea (i.e., the Mediterranean): "then, from the Lower Sea, (along) the Tigris and Euphrates to the Upper Sea, [Enlil] put their roads in good order for him."[141] If true, this action would have brought him, out of necessity, directly through the Middle Euphrates region and Ebla's territory in the northern Levant and, thus, likely into conflict with states and their satellite communities across this region.

While this is the case, inscriptions from Mari also reveal conflicts spanning northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant between major powers such as Mari, Ebla, Emar, and Nawar in the decades prior to ca. 2350 BC,[142] in the wake of Lugalzagesi's alleged activities. Indeed, Nawar and Mari were likely responsible for the destruction of Ebla around 2350 BC, which included its Palace G complex.[143] Mari had been militarily active against Ebla throughout the period leading up to this, providing a clear context for the gradual intensification of military activity across this region and the impact that warfare had upon the region's communities.[144] To the extent that this activity appears to have been infrequent, such a portrayal rests on a very fragmentary historical record, which over the last half century has brought to light not only the workings of states such as Ebla and Mari, but also their intensive interactions with Mesopotamian states and communities throughout the northern Levant. Consequently, our picture is a dim reflection of the actual situation.

Ebla is the most notable casualty of the region's conflicts, with its destruction likely the result of conflict between emerging regional powers. While there is little consensus about who destroyed Ebla, with evidence now favoring a sacking by Mari rather than by Sargon or Naram-Sin, there is no doubt about the impact of the destruction on Ebla. The excavated remains of Palace G at Ebla preserve the remains of more than 2,000 tablets written in cuneiform in a local language that has been dubbed Eblaite. These tablets preserve the inner workings of Ebla's royal palace, and provide a sense of the sheer scale of Ebla's sheep-rearing, wool-producing landscape and the accompanying textile industry.[145] They also preserve references to interactions with mar-tu[146] and warfare as well as treaties with rivals.[147] Outside of the destruction of the palace little is known of the early settlement at Ebla owing to the presence of MBA monumental buildings that lie overtop the third-millennium remains. However, the Temple of the Rock in Area HH, as discussed earlier, provides the oldest *in antis* temple type attested at Ebla to date, and may have been

[141] *RIME* 1.14.20; Frayne 2008: 436.
[142] Lebeau 2012: 309; Archi and Biga 2003; Calcagnile, Quarta, and D'Elia 2013.
[143] Finkbeiner, Novák, Sakal, et al. 2015b: 435.
[144] Frayne 2008: 293–343.
[145] For bibliography on textiles, see Scarpa 2017: 46.
[146] Archi 1985.
[147] For example, Tonietti 2010.

dedicated to an early incarnation of 'Adad.[148] Ebla's destruction in ca. 2350 BC, despite its relatively rapid rebuilding, would have reverberated across the region.

Akkadian Imperial Control, from 2300 BC

While a detailed comparison of early Sumerian and Akkadian military activity in the north may not be possible, Akkadian interest was almost certainly piqued by the interregional ambitions of third millennium states such as Mari and Ebla that had already contributed to conflict and regional unrest prior to Akkadian intervention (Table 2.2). Akkad took an active role in the area during the reign of its founder, Sargon (2296–2240 BC),[149] eventually extending political control over "Mari, Iarmuti, and Ebla as far as the Cedar Forest,"[150] whether or not this required besieging these towns. There is, for example, no destruction at Ebla attributed to Sargon. Although he mentions no encounters with Amorites, the earliest Akkadian reference to mar-tu dates to the reign of Naram-Sin (2213–2176 BC), his grandson. Naram-Sin campaigned against the mar-tu who were under the leadership of a leader by the name of Apishal at a place identified as the mar-tu mountain, called Bashar, identified with modern Jebel Bishri to the south of the Euphrates (Figure 2.1).

> Naram-Sin went from Ashimananum to Shishil. At Shishil he crossed the Tigris River and [went] from Shishil to the [east] bank of the Euphrates River. He crossed the Euphrates River and [went] to [Mount] Bashar, the MAR.DÚ mountain ... [Naram-Sin] marched to Habshat. Naram-Sin, [going] from the Euphrates River, reached Bashar, the MAR.DÚ mountain. He personally decided to fight: [the two armies] made [battle] and fought one another. By the verdict of the goddess Ishtar, Naram-Sin, the mighty was victorious in battle over [Apishal] at [Mount] Bashar, the MAR.DÚ mountain. ... He struck down in the campaign a total of 9 chiefs and 4,325 men. Naram-Sin, the mighty captured [?] captives and the king of Apishal. ... [He captured] leaders and chiefs, as well as 5,580 captives. Total: 6 generals. Total: 17 governors. Total: 78 chiefs. Total: [?] captains. ... [Grand] total: [?] kings. [Grand] total: 13 generals. [Grand] total: 23 governors. Grand total: 2,212 chiefs. Grand total: 137,400 men. The god Enlil showed [him the way and] Naram-Sin, the mighty, struck down as many as there were in the campaign, and captured [them].[151]

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[148] Matthiae 2013g.
[149] The history of Naram-Sin's military activity in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant is summarized by Sallaberger 2007: 425–31; see also Weiss 2014: 378.
[150] *RIME* 2.1.1.11, also 2.1.1.12; Frayne 1993: 28, 30.
[151] *RIME* 2.1.4.2, pp. 91–94.

TABLE 2.2. *Reigns of the kings of Akkad (after Kuhrt 1995)*

Ruler	Dates BC
Sargon	2296–2240
Rimush	2239–2230
Manishtushu	2229–2214
Naram-Sin	2213–2176
Sharkallishari	2175–2150

The portrayal of the campaign against the mar-tu as part of a broader campaign to suppress the "Great Revolt" suggests a coordinated military resistance to Akkadian rule during Naram-Sin's reign in "the four quarters of the world."[152] The recognition of the supporting relationship that northern Mesopotamian, but seemingly also southern Anatolian, settlements played to settlements in the zone of uncertainty exposes the types of relationships that warranted Akkadian intervention so far north. The revolt was so extensive that Iphur-Kish, the ruler of Kish, had purportedly managed to lead a coalition of city-states bolstered by mar-tu highlanders ([śa]-dú-kì) to the gates of Akkad at the start of Naram-Sin's reign.[153]

It is with the *sadu*, so-called highlanders,[154] that the mar-tu enter history in a military capacity in Mesopotamia, resisting foreign intervention by force. While totals are provided for the captives that Naram-Sin took during his suppression of the revolt, it is impossible to ascertain what percentage of these figures pertain directly to the mar-tu. Šar-kali-šarri also battled with mar-tu at Mount Bashar late in his reign,[155] revealing the potential for the strategic exploitation of this landscape of refuge against Akkadian interests. Despite a lack of direct references in either set of Akkadian texts, they illustrate one of a number of means by which mar-tu were integrated into southern Mesopotamian societies – namely as prisoners of war.

There is no evidence to suggest that Amorites played a role in the volatile events that may have befallen settlements in the zone of uncertainty around the same time,[156] despite such characterizations in twentieth century scholarship that came to be an integral part of the so-called Amorite hypothesis. Rather, given their integration within the society and economy of the northern Levant before Ebla's ruin (i.e., 2350 BC), these destructions were evidently

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[152] *RIME* 2.1.4.6, p. 104.
[153] *RIME* 2.1.4.6, p. 104.
[154] For the translation of sa-du-i mar-du[ki] as "Amorite highlanders," see Frayne 1991: 386.
[155] *RIME* 2.1.5, p. 183.
[156] Chronologies for the destructions of northern Levantine sites excavated during the mid-twentieth century are notoriously difficult to reckon with historical chronologies owing to a lack of radiocarbon dates and poor understandings of the stratigraphies of these sites.

the result of military incursions by Mesopotamian empires or conflicts between centers such as Mari and Ebla,[157] mostly unreferenced among our limited sources. This observation permits, however, the recognition that the social impact of these campaigns, from at least the beginning of the Akkadian Empire, was a shared experience by the region's communities, urban and rural, which included the inhabitants of the region's polities: Amorites, Hurrians, and Subareans, among those that can be labeled. Such circumstances must be factored into considerations regarding the shared cultural experiences across northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant that informed the formation of Amorite and other identities in the region.

The absence of archaeological or textual data for substantive exploitation of the region around Mt. Bashar (Jebel Bishri), south of the Euphrates, during the late third millennium, suggests that early mar-tu presence in this landscape was primarily an innovation of the period following the decline of Akkadian imperial control in this region and not earlier. Jebel Bishri should thus be regarded as little more than a landscape of refuge for the fleeing mar-tu army and it should not be interpreted as the seat of Amorite culture.[158] Any actions taken against mar-tu may be characterized largely as policing efforts to keep open the Euphrates corridor against raiding elements exploiting this landscape, which was near but sufficiently distant from the Euphratean corridor as well as the desert route to the central Levant via Tadmor. This is analogous to the situation in the Nile Valley and the use of oases away from the Nile as rebel safe havens from which they periodically raided the inhabitants of the Nile Valley.[159] As surveys of the Jebel Bishri have unequivocally demonstrated, the region featured no substantial permanent settlement during the third millennium.[160] Overall, Akkadian references to mar-tu straddle fewer than sixty-five years – from the start of Naram-Sin's reign to the end of Šar-kali-šarri's reign – quite possibly all in the wake of the onset of a critical period of decline in rainfall that most acutely impacted the zone of uncertainty.

The Onset and Impact of Aridification, from 2200 BC

Archaeological data from excavations of sites within the zone of uncertainty reveal that a major decline in settlement took place during the last two centuries of the third millennium BC when, it is suggested, rainfall precipitously declined.[161] Known as the 4.2 ka BP event owing to its relatively rapid

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[157] Burke 2008: 90–91; also Chapman 2009: 2–3.
[158] Contra Lönnqvist 2009.
[159] Morris 2010; Morris 2018.
[160] For example Lönnqvist 2006; Lönnqvist 2008a; Lönnqvist, Törmä, Lönnqvist, et al. 2011; Morandi Bonacossi and Iamoni 2012.
[161] See Weiss 2014 and bibliography therein.

onset around 2200 BC, climate studies have identified a major disruption to rainfall patterns in the Fertile Crescent beginning at this time, which marks the start of a period now known as the Meghalayan.[162] This change lasted several centuries, through approximately 1900 BC and evidently impacted cultural developments from the Mediterranean Basin to Europe, China, Africa, and the New World.[163] The global identification of signatures of this event together with recent consideration of its varied effects on different ancient cultures add weight to renewed efforts to further substantiate both evidence for the event as well as the event's impact on different communities.

The 4.2 ka BP event is identified on the basis of proxy climate data across the ancient Near East and neighboring regions, ranging from ice and lake pollen cores to cave deposits.[164] Indeed, it is difficult to appreciate the scope of climatic and ecological factors that played into this global event, though the proxy data provide some sense of its varied impact upon diverse biomes. Furthermore, as recognized in modern times, the impact of the event was by no means the same across the globe, with some areas becoming drier while others likely were more humid, and still others likely experienced negligible change.[165] Consequently, the varied effects of this phenomenon complicate the conclusions that can be drawn regarding its implications for societies that experienced it.[166] When, for instance, Harvey Weiss, one of the event's principal investigators, originally correlated the decline of the Akkadian Empire with this phenomenon,[167] this correlation was widely criticized as simplistic and environmentally deterministic.[168] What is clear however, is that declines in settlement during this lengthy period were principally felt across the zone of uncertainty from the Levant to the Zagros Mountains of Iran. This settlement collapse reveals that the greatest impact of this event was felt by communities in the arid margins that were entirely dependent on rainfall for pasturage and agriculture.[169] While discussions continue concerning the overall impact of climate change at the end of the third millennium BC,[170] the accumulating data present a convincing picture of its potential impact, particularly for communities inhabiting marginal zones across the

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[162] Meller, Arz, Jung, et al. 2015; Ran and Chen 2019.

[163] Walker, Berkelhammer, Björck, et al. 2012: 653–56; see also International Chronostratigraphic Chart v2018/08 (www.stratigraphy.org). See essays in Meller, Arz, Jung, et al. 2015; for China, see also Li 2018: 83–86.

[164] Weiss 2014; Kaniewski, Marriner, Cheddadi, et al. 2018; Höflmayer 2014.

[165] Weiss 2017b.

[166] Wiener 2014.

[167] Weiss and Courty 1993, but more recently Weiss 2017a.

[168] Butzer and Endfield 2012; Middleton 2018. Concerning the southern and central Levant, see Genz 2015.

[169] Lawrence, Philip, Hunt, et al. 2016: 10.

[170] For doubts about its impact on Egypt, see Moeller 2005, and also Moreno García 2015.
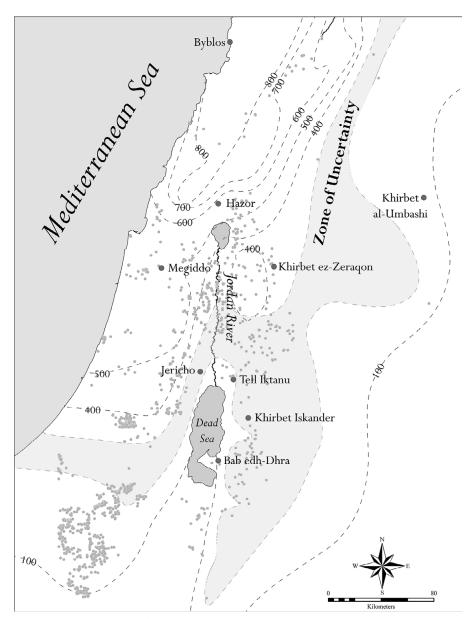
ancient Near East.[171] Further evidence suggests that a decline in rainfall, albeit far more gradual, was already underway in the Jazira before 2200 BC,[172] and that worsening conditions were exacerbated by local and imperially sponsored warfare by the Akkadian Empire and possibly by local changes to environments such as deforestation or overgrazing.[173] Together climate and settlement data increasingly permit diachronically sensitive and regionally specific reconstructions of the impact of prolonged drought conditions and trajectories of response among communities inhabiting the zone of uncertainty.

Much of northern Mesopotamia seems to have experienced rainfall sufficiently above the minimum requirements throughout the fourth millennium, providing conditions responsible for late Chalcolithic Uruk exploitation and settlement expansion. Yet these conditions reversed during the third millennium, with this boundary receding northward across Mesopotamia and north and west in the Levant (Figure 2.7).[174] Data for cereal production suggests that shifts had been made toward drought-tolerant species in the Jazira over the course of the third millennium, while a broader plant spectrum is attested at sites in the Euphrates.[175] Prior dependence in these areas on rainfed agropastoralism left this zone susceptible to a devastating reversal of fortune, which has been referred to as an episode of "collapse" in much of the literature of the past several decades.[176]

At present, it is not possible to precisely relate the radiocarbon-dated climate data – with its combined margin of error of nearly half a century – to the historical chronology of Mesopotamia. Yet archaeological evidence from sites in the Khabur drainage permits the suggestion that sudden climatic deterioration in the region may have occurred during the lengthy reign of Naram-Sin (2213–2176 BC), grandson of Sargon. It is interesting, for example, that no written sources mentioning northern Mesopotamia exist from the end of Naram-Sin's reign until the start of the Ur III, after which they are also extremely limited. This would seem to suggest either a growing disinterest in the region, which would be strange, a limited number of communities inhabiting the region with which to interact, or both – and the inability to do anything but accept these sudden environmental and demographic changes.[177]

At Tell Brak, among the many indicators that may point to Naram-Sin's reign as the period marking the onset of this decline, are the unfinished remains of the fortress bearing bricks stamped with Naram-Sin's name. To

[171] Weiss 2014: 368–70; also Riehl and Bryson 2007: 525–27.
[172] Kuzucuoğlu 2007.
[173] Pruß 2013; Kaufman and Scott 2014.
[174] Bieniada 2016.
[175] Riehl and Bryson 2007.
[176] Schwartz 2006.
[177] Sallaberger 2007: 431.

2.7 Map of settlement in the southern Levant, showing location of zone of uncertainty, and rainfall.
Map by Amy Karoll

this is added evidence for the sudden abandonment of administrative buildings and the lower town, with the site unoccupied until the nineteenth century BC.[178] An analogous situation is attested but with clearer radiocarbon evidence

[178] Weiss 2014: 372.

and more dramatic details at Tell Leilan.[179] Not only are unfinished buildings attested there, but unformed clay balls, which represent unused clay for tablets, were left on many floors. Despite a sudden abandonment of most of Tell Leilan, some occupation persisted for thirty to fifty years at the site, but evidently without Akkadian meddling.[180] In the western Khabur, Tell Mozan (ancient Urkesh) also shrank from 120 to 20 ha, and south of it Tell Arbid decreased by 20 percent with thirty to fifty years of settlement after Akkadian departure.[181] Rural settlement decline parallels the abandonments of large portions of these sites.[182] The combined evidence might even support the lower of two options for the Akkadian chronology, in which Naram-Sin's reign straddled the onset of the 4.2 ka BP event.[183] Whatever the precise order between Akkadian intervention and the onset of a prolonged period of aridity, together these events represented a one-two punch to the region, albeit not achieving a knock-out blow.

The contraction of rainfall isohyets to the west in the southern Levant also contributed to shifts in settlement. South-central Transjordan, in particular, witnessed a gradual abandonment of late third millennium sites.[184] A number of unwalled settlements in the Jordan Valley have been excavated, such as Sha'ar Hagolan, Tel Yosef, Umm Hammad, Meshra al-Abiad, Tell Iktanu, and Tell Abu en-Ni'aj.[185] During the first half of the EB IV (i.e., EB IVA) large urban centers were common, in sharp contrast to settlement to the west of the Jordan Valley, where decline began after 2500 BC.[186] Among persistent urban centers were Khirbet Iskander, Tell Iktanu, and Bab edh-Dhra'. Yet these centers were also abandoned by the end of the third millennium and there are indications that this decline may have been the result of increasing aridification in marginal zones that accompanied a westward contraction of rainfall isohyets and, likely, an ensuing decline in the water table after 2200 BC.[187]

The decades around 2200 BC saw the dramatic confluence of environmental and political circumstances that appears to have made continued exploitation of vast tracks within the zone of uncertainty untenable. This process bears the hallmarks of events that would contribute to forced migration, resulting in the abandonment of grazing land within the vicinity. Despite the recognition of varied responses by surviving communities, particularly in

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[179] Weiss, Manning, Ristvet, et al. 2012.
[180] Weiss 2014: 373.
[181] Koliński 2012.
[182] Weiss 2014: 372.
[183] Glassner 1987.
[184] D'Andrea 2014b: 234.
[185] Richard, Long, Holdorf, et al. 2010; Prag 2014: 398; Falconer and Fall 2016.
[186] Regev, Miroschedji and Boaretto 2012.
[187] Cordova and Long 2010: 27–34.

the northernmost stretches of the Jazira, where higher rainfall prevailed, and within the well-watered Euphrates Valley,[188] these events provide a basis for considering both their short-term and long-term impact on the region's displaced population and ensuing cultural changes that occurred in neighboring regions. As suggested in the foregoing reconstruction, Amorite communities appear to have been among those most affected by these changes.

[188] Ur 2015.

APPENDIX

TABLE 2A.1. *Large, third-millennium settlements equal to or greater than 5 ha along and adjacent to the Middle Euphrates Valley*

Site	Size before 2200 BC (ha)	Size after 2200 BC (ha)	References
Banat	30	–	E. Cooper 2006: 49
Bi'a (Tuttul)	36	–	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Birecik	6	–	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Emar	40?	40?	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Hadidi	56	56	E. Cooper 2006: 50
Halawa A	16	–	E. Cooper 2006: 50
Oylum	10	–	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Selenkahiye	10	–	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Sweyhat	15	40	Danti and Zettler 1998
Terqa	25	25	Finkbeiner et al. 2015c: 15–16, tables 4 and 5
Tilbeşar	56	–	Kepinski 2007: 331
Titriş Höyük	38	3	Algaze 1996: 129
TOTAL (ha)	**338**	**164**	

TABLE 2A.2. *Large third-millennium settlements equal to or greater than 5 ha in the Jazira*

Site	Size before 2200 BC (ha)	Size after 2200 BC (ha)	References
Khabur Drainage			
Abu Hajaira I	5	?	Lebeau 2011b: 15
Arbid	50	?	Lebeau 2011b: 15
Barri	7	?	Lebeau 2011b: 14

TABLE 2A.2. *(continued)*

Site	Size before 2200 BC (ha)	Size after 2200 BC (ha)	References
Bderi	5	–	Pfälzner 1990: 67
Beydar	28	–	Burke 2008: 168
Brak (Nagar)	70	35	Colantoni 2012: 52
Chagar Bazar	15	1	Lebeau 2011b: 15; Weiss 2014: 373
Hammoukar	98	–	Ur 2010: 150–51
Leilan	90	–	Ristvet et al. 2004: 262
Melebiya	7	–	Lebeau 2011b: 15
Mohammed Diyab	25	–	Nicolle 2012; see also Quenet 2011: 36
Mozan (Urkesh)	130	<20	Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 2002: 163–68
Balikh Drainage			
Kazane Höyük	100	–	Creekmore 2010: 74
Wadi Hammar			
Abu Schachat	28	–	Lebeau 2011b: 15
Bugha	18	–	
Chuera	90	–	
Glea	16	–	
Khanzir	33	–	
Jebel Abd al-Aziz			
Hamam Gharbi	10	–	Kouchoukos 1999: 367–74
Hamam Sharqi	11	–	
Hazna	6	–	
K156	6	–	
K192	5	–	
Mabtuh Gharbi	27	–	
Mabtuh Sharqi	44	–	
Maghr	10	–	
Mahrum	8	–	
Malhat ad-Daru	33	–	
Mityaha	8	–	
Muazzar	11	–	
Qashga	5	–	
Sha'ir	18	–	
Tuenan	11	–	
Zahamaq	18	–	
TOTAL (ha)	**1046**	**<56**	

TABLE 2A.3. *Large third-millennium settlements equal to or greater than 5 ha in the marginal northern Levant evidencing settlement change*

Site	Size before 2200 BC (ha)	Size after 2200 BC (ha)	References
Zone of Uncertainty			
Jabbul region	56	36	Yukich 2013: 198
Munbatah	5	5	Mantellini et al. 2013: 174–76.
al-Rawda	16	–	Castel 2007: 161
as-Sour	9	–	Burke 2008: 219
Sh'airat	96	–	Georges 2016
Umm el-Marra	20	–	Burke 2008: 225
Umbashi	30	60	Braemer et al. 2004: 364
West of Zone of Uncertainty			
Mardikh *Ebla*	47	47?	Burke 2008: 199
Tuqan	25	25	Mantellini et al. 2013: 179
Qatna and regional settlement	25	42–59	Morandi Bonacossi 2007a
TOTAL (ha)	**329**	**215–232**	

THREE

BEYOND PASTORALISM

Diaspora and Opportunity, 2200–2000 BC

The late third millennium comprises a period of considerable population relocations that are evident in the archaeological record across the Near East. Whether due to political or environmental changes, or both, these diaspora cultivated intensive social interactions among a number of increasingly visible social groups. This new social environment led to new opportunities for negotiations of the social and political status of groups, who were previously regarded primarily as outsiders or foreigners, at the margins of Mesopotamian, Levantine, and Egyptian societies. The result of the negotiations of their relationships was a broader participation of these populations in roles beyond traditional agropastoralist subsistence. Documents expose the increasing roles of members of these displaced communities as civil servants and mercenaries as well as among a range of less conspicuous trades.

In the wake of the rapid decline of settlement in northern Mesopotamia and the collapse of the Akkadian Empire followed by an interlude of Gutian rule, Sumer played host to immigrants from across a broad arc of the zone of uncertainty. Political control was decentralized and once again reverted to the city-state level with Lagash ascendant, if temporarily, to control much of the south during the reign of a figure named Gudea. Albeit a short-lived floruit, the reign of Gudea marked a period during which the symbols of kingly legitimacy served widely, fundamentally centering on an appropriation of monuments, motifs, and symbols that possessed recent associations with Akkadian kingship. This process, however, masks subtler mechanisms that led

to the incorporation and social integration of groups such as Amorites, no less Gutians, Elamites, and other foreigners who had descended in increasing numbers on southern Mesopotamia during the decades following 2200 BC.

While it is tempting to view the Ur III Dynasty (2112–2004 BC) as somehow outside this process, its ascendance after Lagash took place within the very same context, namely a southern Mesopotamia beset by social, economic, and political challenges in which rival city-states continued to seek to establish themselves over their neighbors as heirs to Akkad. Under these conditions it is perhaps surprising that the Ur III Dynasty played host to the most prolific corpus of cuneiform documentation ever produced. Owing to the frequent occurrence of Amorite names among Ur III records, they also provide a most important witness to the negotiation of Amorite identity during the closing century of the third millennium, a period that was arguably central to the formation of the character of the dominant institutions across the Fertile Crescent during the centuries that would follow. It is precisely during the Ur III that Amorite tribes and clans as well as individual Amorites emerge as conspicuous social actors in Mesopotamia. These biographies provide vital insights into processes that contributed first to increasing military and ideological power by Amorites but ultimately, and more significantly, to political hegemony by Amorite rulers during the early second millennium.

The available corpus of archaeological and textual sources reveal that the century and a half following the collapse of the Akkadian Empire was the crucial backdrop against which Amorites were increasingly integrated into southern Mesopotamian society and economy. On the one hand, archaeological evidence from the reign of Gudea on provides a range of material culture that was enthusiastically appropriated by would-be rulers until the end of the OB Period. This is particularly exemplified during its early phase, the Isin Period, when elements of kinship were brandished as symbols of the legitimacy of its rule after that of Ur. On the other hand, ample Ur III documentary sources identify a polity intensively seeking to administer and manage its relationship with its provinces. Amorites occupy a visible place within this political economy, notably as mercenaries and civil servants for the state.

Upon the decline of centralized rule during the late OK, political and social circumstances in Egypt during the FIP (2190–1991 BC) similarly primed socioeconomic conditions for the integration and ascendance of outsiders. Asiatics, identified as ʿAmu (ꜥꜣmw) in Egyptian, are increasingly conspicuous in Egyptian society, and would be later, during the Middle Kingdom (MK), even implicated among literary sources as critical actors within the unfolding drama of this period. Among other factors such as economic opportunity, the decline of political centers in the Levant, exacerbated by environmental conditions, may have contributed to increased Asiatic immigration to Egypt.

Consequently, Asiatics are seen to be employed as mercenaries by ambitious Egyptian nomarchs who sought to extend their control over neighboring nomes within Egypt.

MIGRATION

Despite the extensive evidence for dating the onset of aridification across marginal zones of the Levant, Mesopotamia, and portions of western Iran in the wake of the 4.2 ka BP, it remains difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the exact manner in which Akkadian intervention and aridification worked together to initiate the region's settlement decline. Yet it clearly did decline. While timing may be significant to addressing whether Akkad's imperial control of the region waned because of a loss of productive agricultural lands in northern Mesopotamia after ca. 2200 BC, these events collectively assured the abandonment of the vast majority of settlements in the zone of uncertainty and the radical downsizing of others. As will be discussed, this touched off an exodus of unprecedented proportions, and resulted in a diaspora, which included communities of Amorites, Subareans, Gutians, and Elamites, among others.

Influenced by an impressive array of environmental data, in summarizing settlement pattern changes across the northern arc of the Fragile Crescent during this period, Harvey Weiss characterizes the resulting movement as habitat tracking by the region's inhabitants who sought refugia from the irreversible effects drought had on their subsistence.[1] While it is doubtful a restricted biological responses such as "habitat tracking" adequately capture human responses to forced migration, Weiss has implicitly identified the groups affected by this as refugees, thereby providing an opportunity to consider the implications of this event, among the world's earliest evidence for mass refugee migration. Nevertheless, the realities of this context invite us to consider where and how the region's populations sought refuge from these circumstances. At whatever rate they unfolded, both political and environmental factors were likely at play in creating the perfect storm of decline in the zone of uncertainty and the emigration that followed.[2] Despite the limits of our chronological markers, these data – along with a considerable degree of confidence in the traditional chronology of Mesopotamian history – can be employed to provide a fairly nuanced reconstruction of the stages in this process, namely the decline of settlement across the zone of uncertainty, the relocation of inhabitants to neighboring regions, and the ensuing political and socioeconomic effects. The integration of approaches that address the typical

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[1] Weiss 2014: 370–76.
[2] Kennedy 2016.

concerns of refugee populations permit even further elucidation of responses by these migrants and their host communities.

Flight and Abandonments

We may begin by assessing the various regions that witnessed declines and thereby estimating the scale of the displaced population. Weiss observes that shifts in settlement patterns along the Euphrates Valley coincided with changes to regions that previously received 200 mm or more of rainfall per annum, such as the Jazira, as required for sustainable rainfed agriculture. The most precipitous decline in settlement after aridification appears to have occurred across northern Mesopotamia, centering on the Jazira. Settlement among sites of more than 5 ha, which had nearly reached 1100 ha in total settled area, declined to less than 60 ha (Table 2A.2). If 100 persons per hectare are estimated to occupy these settlements, then the shift represents a decline from more than 100,000 inhabitants to as few as 6,000. Also, neither figure accounts for smaller villages in proximity to these settlements, which were, of course, more numerous and larger before 2200 BC. Movements out of the Jazira likely tracked in each of the cardinal directions with resettlement in southern Anatolia, along the Euphrates corridor, and into the northern Levant.

While the settlement data from southern Anatolia are less complete than from northern Mesopotamia, they complement the picture that emerges for the region. Demographic changes in southern Anatolia immediately north of the upper Jazira are suggestive of a region on the boundary between areas that were very differently impacted by these changes. A number of sites exhibit disruptions that were likely the result of aridification and ensuing disruptions to life as normal within these communities (Figure 2.1). West of the Euphrates, the 56 ha settlement of Tilbeşar in the Sajur Valley west of the Middle Euphrates experienced at least two settlement disruptions during the late third millennium.[3] While decline in the same region is also likely at Samsat, smaller sites appear in the area around the site of Titriş Höyük, which was itself reduced in size.[4] Anatolian communities from the Middle Euphrates north of Carchemish experienced considerable stability, however, in their settlement histories during the late third millennium.[5] Carchemish's early settlement is poorly understood to date, but north of Carchemish this is evident at Şaraga Höyük, Zeytinli Bahçe Höyük, and Horum Höyük, where no settlement

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[3] Kepinski 2007.
[4] Abay 2007: 408.
[5] For settlement histories, see Finkbeiner, Novák, Sakal, et al. 2015c: fig. 2, p. 21.

disruption has been detected in the archaeological sequence.[6] Nonetheless, owing to the nascent stage of research, relatively few data permit the recognition of new, small settlements. Such data are particularly significant for potentially revealing, if constrained to a fairly short period of time, accommodation of immigrant populations.

To the south of the Jazira, large settlements along the Euphrates Valley between Emar and Mari appear to have experienced considerable growth during this same period, suggesting another region that likely received migrants after 2200 BC.[7] While more evidence from sites along this stretch of the Euphrates is necessary to test the details of this reconstruction, the growth of urban centers along this stretch does not correlate with traditional demographic growth in antiquity and is better explained by emigration, most reasonably by refugees from the Jazira. Evidence from the area of Tell Ghanem al-'Ali, upstream from Mari, for example, points toward a gradual development of settlement along the valley's periphery during the transition from the late third to early second millennium, the effect of which would have been to leave more cultivable land free within the valley itself.[8] The demographic growth makes it likely that emigration from the Jazira played a major role in this process.[9] There is therefore a fundamental temporal correlation, as outlined by Weiss, between the settlement decline to the north and the growth of settlements in this part of the Euphrates after 2200 BC, which is suggestive of refugee migration. While sudden population increases among urban centers along the middle Euphrates Valley suggest that the valley played host to some of these refugees,[10] the size of these centers does not account for all of the region's displaced inhabitants.

The effects of the decline of settlement in the Jazira were exacerbated by the fact that not all parts of the Euphrates Valley functioned equally well as refugia. Predictably, arid conditions along the watersheds leading to the Euphrates translated to a decline of Euphrates flow but also to less productive land leading from drainages into the Euphrates, and to a predictable decline in dry-farming (non-irrigation) practices along much of the river and its tributaries. This is reflected in the decline and even wholesale abandonment of many urban centers along the Euphrates between Emar and Carchemish,

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[6] Sertok, Kulakoğlu, and Squadrone 2007; Balossi, Di Nocera and Frangipane 2007; Marro 2007.

[7] Geyer, Monchambert, Besançon, et al. 2003: 246–52.

[8] Hasegawa and Ohnuma 2014; Kume and Sultan 2014; Nishiaki 2014.

[9] The expansion of sites such as Emar, Tuttul, and Mari, if it occurred as a result of refugee settlement, finds a parallel in the radical, near four-fold growth of Jerusalem during the late eighth century BC as a result of the influx of refugees from the southern part of the kingdom of Israel to the north (Burke 2011a: 47–50).

[10] Pruß 2013: 139.

west of the Jazira.[11] Despite being located along the Euphrates, settlements upstream from Emar declined severely, sharing in the plight of other communities within the zone of uncertainty.[12] Settlement appears to have declined among sites of more than 5 ha by more than half (Table 2A.1), contributing to an estimated flight of no fewer than 17,400 additional individuals around 2200 BC.

The data in the northern Levant resulting from the analysis of settlement patterns also suggests the movement of refugees farther westward into more humid regions, with the most detectable differences along and west of the corridor from Aleppo to Damascus (Table 2A.3). Within the Jabbul Plain east of Aleppo, Umm el-Marra was clearly abandoned at this time,[13] only to be resettled during the MBA.[14] That the largest EB IV settlements prior to the decline had been concentrated in the eastern half of Jabbul Plain and east of Umm el-Marra suggests the role played by these settlements in Umm el-Marra's pastoralist economy, when this zone experienced higher rainfall.[15]

Whatever the character of its socioeconomic basis, Umm el-Marra dried up for a time in the late third millennium and was abandoned, only to be revived during the early second millennium. Its abandonment likely meant that its inhabitants were forced to seek grazing land in regions to the west to the extent that they were able to continue their activities, following the retreat of rainfall. During the course of the interlude in its settlement or, more likely, upon its resettlement, the elite tombs of the third millennium at the site were desecrated.[16] This would seem to point to an absence of kinship ties between the earlier and later inhabitants. A settlement shift to the west within the Jabbul Plain and a nucleation at a smaller number of sites may also reveal the shifting allegiance of the site's inhabitants,[17] from Eblaite to Yamḥadian overlordship during the MBA. However, during the late third millennium aggregate settlement declined more than 35 percent, from 56 to 36 ha,[18] faring perhaps better because of perennial water sources such as Jabbul Lake.

Like Umm el-Marra and settlements around it, al-Rawda was also abandoned.[19] We may speculate that the gradual decline of al-Rawda, as its excavators suggest, resulted from a decline associated with Ebla's textile economy in the wake of Ebla's destruction in 2350 BC[20] and was aggravated by

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[11] Weiss 2014: 374.
[12] Ibid.; see also Pruß 2013: p. 140, figs. 50 and 49, respectively.
[13] See Matthiae 1979a.
[14] Schwartz, Curvers, Dunham, et al. 2012.
[15] Yukich 2013: 194–201, fig. 5.13.
[16] Schwartz 2013b: 507.
[17] Yukich 2013: 201–8, fig. 5.14.
[18] Ibid.: 198.
[19] Castel 2007: 161.
[20] Castel and Peltenburg 2007.

increasing aridification, culminating in its abandonment before ca. 2000 BC.[21] Notwithstanding that some settlement in the region persisted,[22] declining precipitation over the course of the final quarter of third millennium no doubt caused a shift in wild game to regions to the west – a case of actual habitat tracking, also diminishing its role in hunting migrating herds, as well as lessening its potential to support the large herds that had been pastured in the region. The presence of kites for trapping animals in the vicinity of the site also point to the importance of hunting nearby.[23]

While the settlement pattern around Aleppo is not well understood, changes to the settlement pattern to its south, around Ebla, during the late third millennium may reveal not just the detrimental effects of aridification after 2200 BC but also the realignment of settlement around its water source, namely the ancient Matkh Lake.[24] At Ebla itself, Matthiae identifies three subphases of EB IVB decline during which the settlement is characterized as hosting squatter occupation and is thereafter abandoned for a brief period before the start of the MBA.[25] To what extent this decline reflects the political decline of Ebla after its destruction in 2350 BC, the impact of drought, or both remains to be elucidated. Matthiae suggests, however, that the abandonment of Ebla at the end of the third millennium may have been "provoked by the arrival of new population groups, who used new techniques in pottery production and founded" the town ca. 2000 BC.[26] Consequently, Matthiae views the changes in material culture accompanying the start of the MBA as induced by population shifts, first a decline, followed by a resurgence.

Paralleling the trend at Ebla, from the EB IVA (28 sites) to the EB IVB (24 sites) the region around Ebla experienced no less than a 14 percent reduction in the total number of sites and at least a 33 percent drop around the Matkh Lake, from 18 sites to 12.[27] This is considerable given that these sites provide a mixed representation of settlement phases within the EB IVB (pre and post-drought) and the fact that the lake was receding from 2200 BC and only began to recover after 1900 BC before eventually drying up entirely.[28] While there appears to be only a limited reduction in the total number of sites from the EB IVA to the EB IVB[29] – that is after 2350 BC – it must be kept in mind that this settlement history is a mixed dataset for evaluating the actual

[21] Castel 2007: 161.
[22] Ibid.: 173.
[23] Barge, Castel, and Brochier 2014: 177–80.
[24] Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013.
[25] Matthiae 2007: 505–15.
[26] Matthiae 2010: 206–8.
[27] Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013.
[28] Cantelli, Picotti, and Martina 2013.
[29] Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013: table 8.7.

impact of the 4.2 ka BP event. A periodization based on Ebla's archaeological history means that the EB IVB captures perhaps as much as a century or more of settlement prior to aridification (i.e., 2350–2200 BC) in addition to the subsequent two centuries of its impact. It is likely, therefore, that the direct impact of aridification was greater than these numbers suggest.

Despite the overall decline in settlement around Ebla, the settlement pattern does not reveal a wholesale abandonment of the region, but rather the potential and successful adaptation to changing circumstances. Tell Tuqan along the shore of Matkh Lake, for example, grew during the EB IVB,[30] despite that it too experienced a decline in rainfall. This growth was no doubt due to its proximity to the lake, as it absorbed a shift in local settlement and potentially refugees from the more arid margins. As at Ebla, the site's morphology was later shaped extensively by MBA settlement and largely by its fortifications.[31] The same pattern also existed at a number of sites in Tuqan's hinterland.[32] Considerably to the east of Tuqan and south of Jabbul Lake, 5.3 ha Tell Munbatah continued to be inhabited throughout the EB IV.[33] This site was located on routes leading around the lake toward the Euphrates and north toward Umm el-Marra. Its persistence may highlight the value of this location at a juncture of routes, and reveal this region's role as a corridor for migration from the Euphrates, and a shift southward away from the Jabbul Lake. To Ebla's west, excavations at Tell Afis show, surprisingly, no change in settlement throughout the EB IV, suggesting some limits to the impact of aridification on this region.[34]

To Ebla's south and west of the *très long mur*, Qatna began an ascent during the late third millennium culminating in its establishment as the seat of an MBA kingdom. The expansion of the site, from 25 to 100 ha by the MBA, as well as the emergence of a settlement hierarchy around Qatna represents hypertrophic growth that likely points to an influx of population from outside of the immediate environment. Although the site, in continuation of the EB III settlement, appears to have peaked at about 25 ha during the EB IV, its settlement was accompanied for the first time by the emergence of secondary network of 17 settlements of between 1 and 2 ha during the EB IV,[35] representing 20–35 ha of additional settlement (see Figure 3.1). The attraction at Qatna was the existence of a lake fed by karstic springs that were likely

[30] Cantelli, Picotti, and Martina 2013; Baffi and Peyronel 2013; Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013: 180.
[31] Burke 2008: 221–23.
[32] Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013: 179.
[33] Ibid.: 174–76.
[34] Mazzoni 2013: 209.
[35] Morandi Bonacossi 2007a: 70–72.
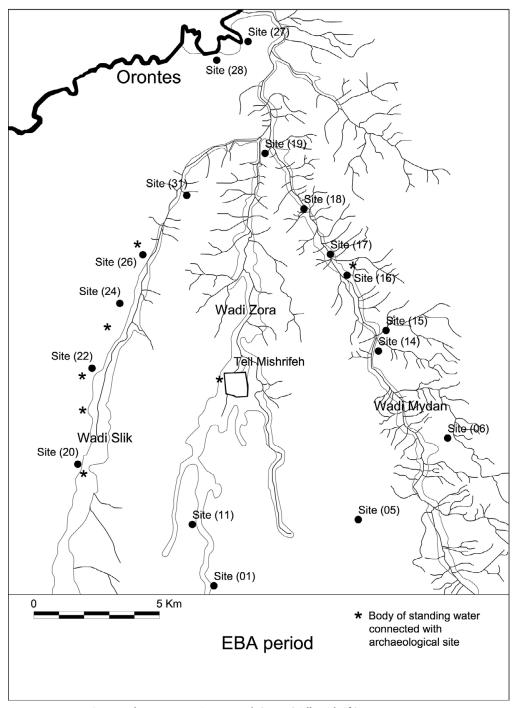
3.1 EB IV settlement expansion around Qatna (Tell Mishrife).
Source: Morandi Bonacossi 2007:71, fig. 6. Reproduced courtesy of Daniele Morandi Bonacossi

responsible for Qatna's original settlement and its robust growth during the MBA,[36] despite declining conditions in regions to the north and east. By the MBA rainfall in this area also increased,[37] buttressing the earlier growth trend. This likely contributed to an intensification of grain production around Qatna that is reflected in the grain storage facilities excavated in the site's center.[38]

An expansion of settlement as at Qatna is also witnessed to its south and west. In the Akkar Plain settlement expanded considerably from the mid-third millennium and continued through the course of the MBA.[39] The expansion of settlement from the EB IV saw the construction of massive grain storage facilities at the site that continued through the early MBA,[40] as at Qatna. While no evidence exists to indicate environmental change around Tell Arqa, or along the coast for that matter, Thalmann has referred to the process accompanying settlement as one of "agricultural colonization" by "new-comers," which was reflected in their maintenance of "burial and agricultural traditions . . . their marginal and short-lived installations of tombs and silos on the outskirts of the site of Arqa."[41] Thalmann's observations point to a long-term process of social integration wherein the Akkar Plain absorbed immigrants during the late third millennium. Similar trends during the EB IV are witnessed in the region east of Qatina Lake to the southwest of Qatna, as exposed during survey,[42] as well as along the Middle Orontes.[43]

South of Ebla and along the margins of dry farming, the site of Khirbet al-Umbashi reveals the sudden decline in settlement that marginal sites experienced. Settlement expansion at the site during the EB IVB correlates with increased settlement in the western and southern stretches of many regions in Syria from 2200 BC, supporting the interpretation of a fairly sudden influx of inhabitants into the region. Nevertheless, Umbashi was also subject to a reversal in its own growth, which had reached nearly 60 ha.[44] The site began to decline in size already by the end of the EB IV, a situation from which it never recovered. Although the data are too limited to permit definitive conclusions – notably in the absence of radiocarbon dates – Umbashi's settlement may point to a later onset of aridity in the zone of uncertainty to the south, supported by data from the region to its southwest.[45]

[36] Cremaschi 2007.
[37] Valsecchi 2007.
[38] Morandi Bonacossi 2007a: 69.
[39] Thalmann 2007.
[40] Ibid.: 225–30.
[41] Ibid.: 230–31.
[42] Philip 2007: 241.
[43] Bartl and al-Maqdissi 2007.
[44] Braemer, Échallier, and Taraqji 2004: 364.
[45] Langgut, Neumann, Stein, et al. 2014; Finkelstein and Langgut 2014.

While the settlement data for the northern Levant during this transition does support an agropastoralist character for a large proportion of the settlements under review, this perspective is skewed by a dataset resulting predominantly from an intensive research focus on the marginal hinterlands to the east of Aleppo, Ebla, and Qatna. Limited attention has been given to the more intensively settled regions west of Ebla, Qatna, Homs, Hama, and around Damascus. To the extent that these areas have been systematically examined during more recent exploration, the Akkar Plain, the region around Qattina Lake, and the Orontes Valley, for example, reveal the potential for accounting for immigration during the late third millennium.[46] The notable blindspots in this analysis remain Aleppo and its hinterland and the details of settlement in the Orontes Valley. Even so, it is remarkable that sites between Ebla and Qatna at which settlement change occurred still indicate an overall decline in settlement, as was the case in the Jazira, albeit far less severe. Nevertheless, an additional 10,000 or more individuals are seen to be displaced from this region, utilizing a density coefficient of 100 persons per hectare (Table 2A.3).

Although the excavation and survey data can only serve as proxies for tracking demographic changes during the late third millennium in the northern Levant, it is difficult to escape some fundamental observations concerning these changes. First, the evidence for declines among agropastoral communities within the zone of uncertainty correlates with an evident abandonment of the margins of the Levant. Second, preliminary data also indicate that agricultural activities intensified in the Levantine steppe wherever local water sources existed, such as around the Jabbul, Matkh, and Qattina Lakes, and in regions to the west such as the Akkar Plain and along the coast, suggesting the gravitation of displaced populations to more humid regions. Corelative growth of older sites in these refugia accompanied a pattern of settlement infilling that persisted through the early second millennium BC. Third, the settlement trajectory revealed across the northern Levant during the several centuries accompanying the transition to the MBA (ca. 2200–1900 BC) requires an explanation of the relationship between the resettlement of refugee populations and the emergence of "Amorite" kingdoms such as Yamḫad and Qatna that followed in the wake of these population shifts. It is hypothesized here that formerly displaced groups constituted a substantial social element within the power dynamics of these nascent, Amorite-ruled states. The settlement data from the northern Levant reveal, therefore, a classic population "creep," as migration out of the mid-to-upper Euphrates Valley and the western Jazira and across the Jabbul Plain occurred during the last two centuries of the third millennium BC, and quite possibly within as little as a single generation.

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[46] Weiss 2014: 376.

The Scale of Displacement

The sum of individuals who vacated the zone of uncertainty after 2200 BC is impossible to estimate exactly given the gaps in survey and settlement data. Nevertheless, using estimates from extant data we are able to provide the low end of estimates that succeed in exposing the magnitude of this displacement. Harvey Weiss, for example, suggests a figure of as many as 300,000 based on the trend documented for sites in the affected regions.[47] The foregoing reassessment reveals no fewer than 99,000 displaced from the Jazira, 17,400 from the Middle Euphrates, and approximately 10,000 from territories from northeast to southeast of Ebla. Employing the lowest density coefficient of 100 persons pre ha and net settlement sizes (i.e., not including their fortifications), this suggests a displaced population of no less than 126,400 but possibly as many as 252,800 inhabitants, if a settlement coefficient of 200 persons per ha. Nevertheless, to such figures one would also need to add instances of additional settlement in the hinterlands of these sites that account for large numbers of inhabitants. At a coefficient of 100 persons per hectare for sites smaller than 5 ha, which in many landscapes comprise an aggregate considerably larger than the main sites they surround, we could certainly arrive at a figure comparable to Weiss's estimate of 300,000. This estimate also does not account for settlement farther south within the zone of uncertainty in the Levant, or regions farther east in Mesopotamia, all of which would have experienced similar drought conditions. Whatever the actual numbers may be, these figures reveal a displacement without historical precedent in the region during what was likely a very short period, possibly less than a decade.

This seems wholly reasonable, given these caveats, the timespan over which these migrations took place, and the presumption that we are accounting for only part of the affected population by addressing only sites that were 5 ha or larger. Were such demographic changes spread evenly over the two or three centuries after 2200 BC, the effect would have amounted to hardly a few people per day (something like a nuclear family) to account for the settlement transformations attested. However, the movements in question, as suggested by both the archaeological data and refugee studies, likely took place more rapidly. They also probably centered on larger social groupings such as clans, for example, as quite often represented by a single village or quarter within a larger town, while tribes may have been represented in the abandonment of larger towns or groups of towns from entire regions.[48]

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[47] Weiss 2015: 45.
[48] This social organization is attested for ancient Israel and applicable for pre-modern cultures of the eastern Mediterranean (Schloen 2001: 135–83).

Refugees

Whatever the precise scale of settlement decline may have been, the net result of environmental decline and warfare by ca. 2200 BC was the depopulation of sites between the Balikh Valley and Wadi Khanzir.[49] Sites that were eventually resettled here were only reinhabited after 2000 BC.[50] Inasmuch as the evidence points to a southward migration of refugees into the central stretch of the Euphrates Valley, the abandonment of territories on both sides of the bend of the Euphrates appears to have also contributed to migration farther westward into the northern Levant.[51] The crisis of 2200 BC created a significant and lengthy disruption in what had otherwise functioned as a well-trafficked corridor between northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant over the course of the third millennium. The evidence for the displacement of populations and the data for their movements permit, therefore, a clear ascription of refugee status to the affected populations, be they Amorites, Subareans, Hurrians, or others.

Understanding the movements of some Amorites and other groups as fundamentally governed by the concerns of refugees allows a more nuanced consideration of the spread of Amorite groups during the late third millennium. On the one hand, we are able to consider the conditions governing choices concerning the timing and direction of migrations, but also to explore the range and limitations of opportunities that were open to these groups. A common definition sees refugees as resulting from "forced migration, whether the product of disaster of either manmade or natural causes."[52] However, I have suggested elsewhere that they may be more simply described as risk-initiated, self-migrants.[53] As such, labeling our subjects refugees bring to the fore the complex issues attendant to interpreting the archaeological and historical data from the late third millennium, whether addressing the abandonment of settlements, settlement changes in neighboring regions, or the cultural exchanges that followed. Refugees also provide the potential for understanding cyclical historical and socioeconomic processes since refugees are often driven by a desire to return to a place that they or their ancestors once called home, and sometimes they actually do so. Like an invisible force, a psychological "pull" factor persists among refugees that contributes to efforts to mobilize a return to, if not the maintenance of social contact with, the regions from which they fled.

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[49] Pruß 2013: 143–44.
[50] Ibid.: 139.
[51] Weiss 2014: 374–76.
[52] Oliver-Smith 1996: 305.
[53] Burke 2012: 265.

By widening the scope of our inquiry to account for the concerns of a protracted environmental crisis with which much of northern Mesopotamia and the Levant were beset, we can begin to consider the various strategies that refugees pursued to cope with their circumstances, as illustrated by archaeological and textual data.[54] The starting point is the recognition that the choice to flee such circumstances was one that refugees made as individual social groups, with different levels of tolerance for risk and stress, as determined partly by their economic, social, and/or political circumstances. The different thresholds of decision making with respect to refugee flight result in waves of departures and their resettlements in vintages of immigration.[55]

Depending on the length of time over which rainfall fell below the minimum necessary, the decline in rainfall was likely the primary "push" factor in creating the conditions for and the rate of abandonment. It might therefore account for the variability in both the timing and severity of settlement decline. Settlements closer to the Arabian Desert were likely abandoned earliest. In the context of protracted environmental decline, it is also possible that the migrations in question were acute (i.e., involuntary) movements rather than anticipatory (i.e., voluntary).[56] Unlike flight in anticipation of an expanding empire, for example, persistent deterioration of environmental conditions that very evidently disrupted a centuries-long settlement pattern was unforeseen.

A major factor in the directions of movements by different groups was social and kinship networks, which are often described as "pull" factors. As refugee studies reveal, such networks were likely exploited in determining the directionality of movements, but in other instances these networks may have been ruptured in communities now torn by choices concerning their movements. Chain migration, whereby members of a social group serve as anchors to which families might move, likely directed and sustained this mobility, as groups succeeded in identifying refugia. Although it is only as of the Ur III that Amorite tribal structures are evident in textual sources, these tribal structures, including their divisions into clans, provide the basis for the segmentation of larger communities into functional units that facilitated their mobility, a reality evident in modern refugee contexts to the extent that circumstances permit keeping family structures together.

References to Amorites in the Ebla texts, as discussed earlier, illustrate that Amorite groups clearly possessed social ties with communities in the northern Levant (analogous to their ties to southern Mesopotamian communities), which would have facilitated their relocation to this region. Such relationships

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[54] Burke 2018.
[55] Kunz 1973: 137.
[56] Ibid.: 131–33.

would explain how preexisting social and economic networks could be exploited by refugees, serving to reveal the importance of social agency in refugee movements. According to the Ebla texts, as discussed in Chapter 2, Amorites were socially entangled with communities from Emar to Tuttul along the Euphrates. Amorites with a familiarity with the Levant, whether owing to their proximity or the strength of social and economic ties, were more likely to exploit these relationships insofar as they identified areas within this region as refugia. Since early core territories of Amorite settlement may already have stretched well into the northern Levant before 2200 BC, the limited textual sources at our disposal contribute to an understatement of Amorite ties with the northern Levant, though the settlement data at the end of the third millennium and the trajectory of settlement expansion during the MBA might suggest the legacy of these social connections.

In addition to the disruption of communication among the agropastoral communities in the zone of uncertainty, one legacy of these migrations was a cultural rift that emerged across the Fertile Crescent, particularly around the Middle Euphrates, which had previously functioned as a social bridge connecting Mesopotamia and the northern Levant. While this disruption was not complete, as settlement persisted at some level in this region, the resulting rift might be regarded a *speciating event* of sorts, as it affected the formation of regional cultural identities as a part of a broader social Amorite identity. During a crucial point in this migration groups were compelled to choose the communities among which they would seek refuge. It seems therefore quite likely that this moment contributed to varied trajectories in the formation of the identities of groups labeled Amorite. This would include at least one with a broad westward-orientation and the other with southern and eastern connections. Such circumstances may have been responsible, therefore, for the development of independent yet once-related Mesopotamian and Levantine Amorite identities, that centered on tribal identities. This rift was by no means absolute, however, and the eastern and western elements arguably maintained a core set of shared traditions throughout the first half of the second millennium BC. The regeneration of urban societies at the start of the second millennium in the Levant contributed to a restoration of intensive cultural interactions between these regions through political, social, and economic mechanisms, reestablishing the contacts that existed before 2200 BC (see Chapter 4).

A refugee-centered framework for understanding Amorite identity in the late third millennium also shifts our understandings of Amorite identity away from a primary socioeconomic identification with pastoral nomadism that has overshadowed earlier studies. For more than the past half-century pastoral nomadism has served as the dominant explanatory framework for seeking to

understand the emergence of Amorites during the late third millennium,[57] despite critiques concerning the failure of such models to account for the status and location of Amorites in Mesopotamia.[58] Nonetheless, the limited explanatory potential offered by pastoralist-centered interpretations for these circumstances is now clear.[59] In the case of northern Mesopotamia, the environmental and archaeological data simply do not permit that a large number of displaced individuals pursued the same subsistence strategies after their migration. Whatever their numbers, during the mid-third millennium, the total amount of pastureland in the Fertile Crescent declined and thus reduced the number of those displaced who could continue to engage in pastoralism. Consequently, we must account for more diverse subsistence strategies, many of which may have resulted in a loss of direct control of food production and subsistence. Displaced groups may therefore have experienced the risks endemic to refugee populations.[60] Nevertheless, migration west of the Euphrates and to some extent south of Mari certainly included agropastoralists, who also would have contributed to incursions into southern Mesopotamia, including groups labeled Amorites. In light of their changed conditions, it is unnecessary and inaccurate to see pastoralism, of whatever type, as the prevalent employment associated with Amorites in the wake of this migration.[61] There was simply insufficient pastureland to permit pastoralism at the earlier scale.

RESETTLEMENT

The end of Akkadian rule around 2150 BC, adding to the calamities brought about by aridification perhaps as little as half a century earlier, is usually characterized as a period of social and political upheaval across Mesopotamia. The century marks a relatively quiet period for Amorites in the extant sources, but this very likely masks an important transitional period during which they were increasingly economically, socially, and politically integrated into Mesopotamian society. There is, however, no basis for romanticizing this process since it was likely an accidental byproduct of rule by other foreign groups, such as the Gutians who were seemingly more accommodating than the Akkadians had been. An ill-defined period of time separates the end of Akkadian rule from the rise of Ur as a regional power around 2112 BC. Despite the limited nature of our sources for Gutian rule by the Second Dynasty of Lagash in the second half of the twenty-second century BC, this interlude can hardly have been insignificant

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[57] See Porter 2012.
[58] See Kamp and Yoffee 1980; Arbuckle and Hammer 2018.
[59] Burke 2017: 272–76.
[60] Cernea and McDowell 2000.
[61] Contra Porter 2012.

to Amorite inclusion in Mesopotamian social, economic, and political institutions. Its importance can be realized by exploring the processes attendant as tens of thousands of individuals found themselves witnesses to regime change and the opportunities this presented them.

Urbanization

A limited number of Ur III references to third-millennium sites in northern Mesopotamia, along with evidence for the abandonment or reduction in size of these sites, appears to confirm the impact of settlement decline in northern Mesopotamia.[62] Neither Carchemish, Harran, nor Nagar, to name but a few, are attested. Instead, Urkesh, the dominant surviving settlement – located in the northernmost stretches within the region – appears to have assumed the most prominent status.[63] In southern Mesopotamia, however, the Ur III embodies a century for which radical urbanization exposes what can hardly be other than a substantive influx of immigrants. Yet at least in part owing to their longstanding social entanglements to individuals who already lived there, they remain fairly inconspicuous archaeologically. Others, such as the Gutians, were evidently opportunists seizing upon a moment of decline after the Akkadian Period to establish their own fiefdoms.[64]

   Despite the challenge of identifying outsiders in the archaeological record of particular sites, settlement surveys in southern Mesopotamia reveal both a doubling in the number of sites and a doubling in the size of sites in some regions. Yet a radical and indisputable increase in settlement farther to the south during the Ur III and Larsa periods does not hide this demographic anomaly. This has often been seen as part and parcel of the growth of the Ur III state, though the growth is recognized as unusual: "The overwhelming concentration in large cities for a considerable part of this sequence must be regarded as a hypertrophic, 'unnatural,' condition for an agricultural civilization with preindustrial transport technology."[65] It is difficult to ignore how significant such dramatic growth in the number of new settlements and total settled area was from the Akkadian to the Ur III-Larsa periods, even if we were to account for the various caveats concerning the nature of the data collection and its interpretation (Figure 3.2).[66] Thus, not only did existing urban centers grow, but as the names of new OB towns reveals, new settlements were founded during this period. Just as with the decline in the north, all parts of southern Mesopotamia were not influenced equally by these demographic

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[62] Sallaberger 2007: 435–39.
[63] Ibid.: 440.
[64] Steinkeller 2015b.
[65] Adams 1981: 138–39.
[66] Ibid.: fig. 25.
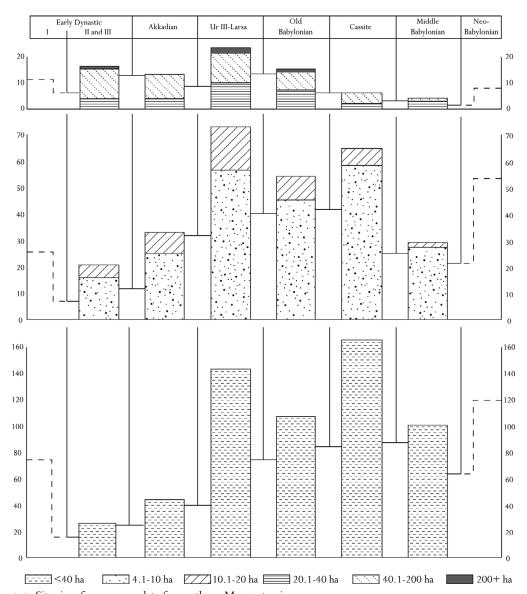
3.2 Site sizes from survey data for southern Mesopotamia.

Source: Adams 1981:139, fig. 25. Note growth during Ur III-Larsa period. Illustration by Amy Karoll

changes. Settlement in the Diyala, for example, which was probably also affected by decreased rainfall, declined slightly during the Akkadian Period and remained fairly flat during the Ur III except for a few large towns.[67]

By the start of the Ur III Dynasty (2112 BC), radical settlement expansion, which is here suggested to result principally from immigration, can also be

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[67] Adams 1965: 42–48.

accounted for by means of several other lines of evidence, which together explain the net growth in total numbers of sites as well as the growth of the sites themselves. The largest factor for immigration was arguably environmental decline in the upper stretches of Mesopotamia, as described in the previous chapter, which is easily accounted for on the scale of tens of thousands for southern Mesopotamia. Next to this, Amorites and other social groups may have arrived in Babylonia prior to, during, and after early vintages of refugees, even including prisoners of war, slaves, merchants, and emissaries. Deportees and captives of Akkadian campaigns, as noted in the previous chapter, are, in fact, accounted for among sources.[68] To the extent that we possess numbers, while the numbers attested in any one text are relatively small, the scale likely remains on the order of tens of thousands when all of the activity is accounted for. The appearance of different individuals as members of households or as slaves before the Akkadian Period reveals yet another mechanism, albeit perhaps the least significant, for the occasional presence of individuals and smaller households who were identified as Amorite. Together such "pull" factors brought various vintages of Amorite refugees to the south.

These and other scenarios can account for the infiltration of Amorites and other groups into southern Mesopotamian urban centers and for the founding of new villages. With more than 300,000 persons displaced from the zone of uncertainty from the Levant to western Iran, even the presence of, for example, one quarter in southern Mesopotamia, notably within urban contexts, would result in substantial urban growth. Thus, it seems relatively safe to assume, particularly in comparison with major migrations in modern history, that such events can be implicated in drastically reshaping the settlement landscape of southern Mesopotamia during a relatively short period.

Migration

The implication of hypertrophic growth in southern Mesopotamia, which is suggestive of population growth in excess of normative demographic expectations, is that it must represent the settlement of outside groups who entered the region from elsewhere. Given that this pattern follows in the wake of the abandonment of many settlements across northern Mesopotamia, it seems reasonable to qualify many of these displaced groups as refugee communities. The potential for correlating aspects of the refugee experience with archaeological and textual data provide a significant means for understanding the important role of displaced populations in late third-millennium societies.[69] Anthropological approaches to risk assessments for modern refugee

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[68] Gelb 1972: 80.
[69] Burke 2018.

populations expose one avenue for the investigation of refugees in archaeo-logical contexts.[70] This model builds on the universal risks experienced by refugees, which include landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginaliza-tion, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property assets, and community disarticulation.[71] Even though such conditions are present at the beginning of the refugee experience, notably at the moment of their flight, they are not themselves universal archaeological correlates. This is because these risks largely stem from a lack of social and economic integration which, while common to many refugees, is not charac-teristic of circumstances for all refugees. Refugees absorbed, for example, into family units in small numbers may remain invisible in archaeological contexts. For this reason, certain archaeological phenomena when occurring synchron-ically are likely indicative of the arrival and integration of refugee populations in antiquity. These include settlement pattern fluctuations, radical urbaniza-tion, the presence of certain types of artifacts, linguistic data, major state building projects, and territorial expansion.[72] The manifestation of these phenomena in both Mesopotamia and the Levant at the end of the third millennium are arguably suggestive of the relatively sudden absorption of refugees whose movements resulted from a precipitous decline in environ-mental conditions after 2200 BC.

Social relationships were responsible for creating alternative trajectories, which more adequately account for the socioeconomic realities encountered throughout this process. The concern is to account for human agency and socioeconomic opportunities presented by the dislocation of such large popu-lations, and the realignment of social structures that followed. What is not in dispute is the observation that where partial or entire abandonments of settlements occurred across northern Mesopotamia, these reveal that migration was the major factor in this transition. From this, various questions emerge. To where did these populations move? Why were these locations chosen? When did this occur? And finally, what circumstances contributed to the success or failure of such efforts? In this context, recognition of this phenomenon as fundamentally concerned with tracing the movement of refugee populations is of central importance to articulating the socioeconomic effect that such move-ments had not only upon the refugees themselves, but also on the host communities into which they were sometimes absorbed during the late third millennium BC.

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[70] See Burke 2011a. Concerning the identification of late Iron Age refugees from Israel settling in Judah, see also Burke 2012: 270–84.

[71] The framework for this archaeological approach is built on the Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model (Cernea 2000: 19–20, 22–35), which delineates the primary risks identified in modern case studies of refugees (Cernea 2000: 11–55).

[72] Burke 2012: 271.

As previously noted, among the issues that have clouded a straightforward identification of refugee phenomena in ancient Near Eastern studies has been the inordinate emphasis placed on efforts to identify pastoral nomads and nomadic behavior, originating with romanticized notions of the struggle between "the desert and the sown."[73] Whether or not intentional, the predisposition to associate Amorites almost entirely with the socioeconomic activity of pastoral nomads,[74] successfully accounts for aspects of mobility inherent to such an identification. While doing so, however, it effectively downplayed the potential role played by outright migration. This had been, for example, an explicit effort of the "Amorite hypothesis," which was most clearly formulated in the work of Kathleen Kenyon and came to dominate an earlier generation of scholarship.[75] In that reconstruction, one wave of Amorite invaders were responsible for the decline of urbanism experienced across Mesopotamia and the Levant in the late third millennium, while a second wave then assumed control by the start of the second millennium, introducing the material culture that is the hallmark of the MBA. Its principal failure was not its use of labels, however, but its subscription to a classic diffusionist–migrationist model that provided little by way of explanation or nuance about the underlying processes that accounted for the changes evident in the archaeological record and, thus, made no attempt to account for "push" or "pull" factors.[76] The invoking of invasions and conquests incorrectly attributed the destruction of sites between 2350 and 2200 BC to Amorites, despite also attributing MBA cultural changes to them. Concerning the destruction of sites, as discussed in the previous chapter, historical sources reveal these to have been the result of military activity by northern Mesopotamian (e.g., Mari, Nawar) and Levantine (e.g., Ebla) polities, including against Amorite communities as during the Akkadian Period.[77] This lack of nuance provided no grounds for understanding how Amorite identities were negotiated during such events.

Similar efforts to flesh out the role that pastoral nomads were thought to have had focused on the sedentarization of nomads in various archaeological contexts.[78] Unfortunately, this approach has dominated efforts to interpret settlement patterns across the ancient Near East.[79] When, for example, archaeologists are faced with a period of relatively rapid urban expansion or sudden sedentism characterized by the appearance of villages, the sedentarization of

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[73] Bell 1907; see also the critique in Michalowski 2011: 88–92.
[74] Recently Porter 2012.
[75] Kenyon 1966. For an overview of this hypothesis, see Richard 1980.
[76] For general observations, see Trigger 2006: 217–23. For a critique, see Kamp and Yoffee 1980, esp. p. 89.
[77] Burke 2008: 91–92.
[78] Szuchman 2009.
[79] See Arbuckle and Hammer 2018; Hammer 2012.

nomads has, unfortunately, prevailed as an explanation. In this nearly carte blanche application of the sedentarization of nomads we are in danger of oversimplifying the deeply disruptive nature of environmental change and anthropogenic calamities in antiquity, to say nothing of social and cultural forces that can contribute to these archaeological signatures. Refugee migrations remind us, therefore, of the substantial social pressures that can prompt interactions and often sudden change across regions. Consequently, the socio-economic and cultural impacts of migration very often represent protracted phenomena lasting generations. Apropos scenarios of refugee crises now afforded by circumstances in the Middle East and Africa also illustrate the complex interplay of environmental degradation, population movements, and political tensions within economies not dissimilar from those in the late third millennium BC. Additional data, however, permit a nuanced picture of the plight of refugees after their resettlement and further reveal attitudes and policies toward refugees as well as the extent of social integration of these refugees and their exploitation.

Resettlement and Risk

The relocation and resettlement of Amorites during the decades that followed their forced migration can be potentially clarified by identifying the risks to which such communities were subject and the means by which these were addressed. The settlement and integration of refugees typically becomes more challenging the farther away that they are forced to settle from their home territory, where their social connections to a homeland are weakest. Under such conditions the overwhelming risk is the inability to subsist, or what in modern terms is traditionally characterized as joblessness. In antiquity this was, however, the plight of the landless. Landlessness went hand in hand with the loss of access to common property assets such as family burial grounds, temples, and ritual centers, which is also characteristic of the refugee's plight.[80] Despite sounding anachronistic, employment whether for rations or barterable commodities, could suffice to make up for some of this loss, but only very temporarily. It would introduce, however, a wider range of trajectories that must be accounted for in the subsistence of these refugees and thus reveals that a range of outcomes existed. Among them was only a limited resumption of former subsistence activities – sedentary or pastoralist – following their resettlement, but particularly engagement in activities such as works projects and mercenary employ, which were fundamental extensions of labor opportunities created by ancient states.[81] Accompanying limited social integration, refugees

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[80] Burke 2011a: 44–45.
[81] Steinkeller 2015a.

were more dependent on local rulers, with the result that they were more vulnerable to exploitation as a source of labor.[82]

As I have suggested in the context of Jerusalem's refugee-driven growth during the eighth century BC,[83] major building projects serve to integrate and support refugees, but also to exploit them. As their labor force grew rapidly, refugees, desperate to subsist, presented greater numbers of opportunities for the conscription of labor. Such circumstances would seem to have existed for post-Akkadian rulers as refugees filtered from the north, among them Amorites. This may explain the extensive building projects undertaken during Gudea's reign, but especially during the Ur III (2112–2004 BC), which included massive boundary walls, fortifications, temples, ziqqurats, and canals, extensively documented among royal inscriptions and year names.[84] These support the contention that surplus labor prevailed from the start of the Ur III and may have been a contributing factor to the conditions that prevailed during the late third millennium. Notable among such projects were the construction of defensive walls, since these fortifications also appear to have been intended to control against a regular influx of militants and migrants, notably Amorites, from the north, despite the fact that many other Amorites already lived in the south.

Although under ideal conditions the southward movement of refugees might be traced through material culture, conspicuous markers of Amorite migration remain to be identified, if ever they can be. Whether or not artifactual markers can be easily singled out as evidence of resettlement of refugee populations is a matter of debate since it is subject to various factors such as the rate of this resettlement and the degree and nature of the integration of outsiders over the course of decades and even centuries. In the case of refugees, the archaeological signature will largely depend on the nature of prior relationships between the refugees and their host communities. If these groups were related or experienced intensive social contact prior to their migration, the differences in material culture may be negligible.[85] Given the presence of southern Mesopotamian enclaves in the north resulting from Akkadian imperial intervention as well as regular diplomatic and trade relations from before the Akkadian Period, it is unsurprising that no distinctive markers of northern Mesopotamian material culture have been identified in the south. One of the primary reasons for this may simply be that early Amorite communities existed in southern Mesopotamia from the start of the Ur III. This resulted, therefore,

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[82] Burke 2011a: 50.
[83] Burke 2012: 280–82.
[84] Edzard 1997: 26–180; Frayne 1997.
[85] In many cases the distances that refugees migrated were relatively limited, and the difference in material culture may be minor, if it is detectable (see Burke 2011a). Other proxy data (e.g., isotope and DNA analyses) may also identify population movements in the future.

in the growth of existing Amorite populations among many communities. Only later during the MBA are conspicuously named Amorite settlements evident (see Chapter 5).

Since, as noted, Amorites were already a social element within southern Mesopotamian societies, the integration of refugees from 2200 BC presumably would have been accelerated by existing social networks of Amorite communities. Furthermore, if efforts to distinguish neighboring ethnic groups in other archaeological contexts in the Near East over the past thirty years serve as any guide, the identification of material cultural correlates requires intensive familiarity with subtle distinctions among seemingly commonplace elements of material culture that are reflective of differences in practices and customs across a spectrum of behaviors. The question, however, is what practices or traditions were sufficiently distinct in the Jazira that their appearance in southern Mesopotamia would be conspicuous? While some scholars have predominantly associated Amorite identity with pastoral nomadism, whether in occupation or largely in self-perception,[86] as previously discussed, this perspective is now untenable. It does not account, for example, for a wide range of trajectories that were likely attendant during this transition and that are revealed by the various employments that Amorites held during the Ur III as well as by their ownership of land.[87] Fundamentally, the continued association of Amorites with pastoral nomadism assumes that earlier economic activities could be undertaken by later communities of Amorites. However, this is built on the flawed assumption that the displaced communities maintained access to equivalent pastureland, which we know they did not.

The most significant, shared characteristic of all refugees is their loss of access to land.[88] Whether owned by them or merely available to them for their subsistence, its loss to individuals within agropastoral economies would have fundamentally contributed to nearly all of the other risks to which refugees were susceptible in antiquity (joblessness, food insecurity, increased mortality, etc.). This is fundamentally important to understand since explanations of sedentary communities shifting to pastoral nomadism grossly oversimplifies the social and economic adjustments required in this transition, all the more so during deteriorating environmental conditions, when productive agropastoral lands were increasingly limited. Instead, it is more likely that sedentists sought new areas in which to remain sedentary, and that fewer of their kith and kin were able to continue as pastoralists. In this scenario, the later identification of Amorites with wandering pastoralists, particularly in literature, should be understood as an intentional caricature of Amorite communities. Care should

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[86] Sallaberger 2007: 448; see esp. Porter 2012: 319–20.
[87] Buccellati 1966: 45.
[88] Burke 2011a: 44.

be taken, therefore, in the employment of such references to characterize the social context of Amorite communities.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Because of the complexities of identifying distinct social or ethnic groups within the archaeological record of Mesopotamia, discussion of Amorite identity in the late third millennium BC has relied almost exclusively on textual sources, notably the occurrence of Amorites names and designations for Amorites in texts.[89] As it concerns, in particular, reliance on the occurrence of Amorite names, there has always been the question of the proper linguistic identification of Amorite names, to say nothing of the range of assumptions concerning the relationship between identity and naming conventions, for which there can be no one-to-one correlation. The ascription of identity on the basis of individual names is further complicated by the appearance of several tribal identities for Amorites that occurred alongside each other.[90] Nevertheless, these group labels continue to be treated by scholars as a unified collective, despite the fact that this likely masks the varied experiences of different Amorite groups. Consequently, Amorite identity must be radically recast if we are to make headway with the sources at our disposal. This can be done by seeking to understand why the foreign identity of certain Amorites and not others is marked in various sources, understanding the qualifications surrounding the use of onomastics and language to identify individuals, recognizing how individuals affiliated with larger kinship structures, and exploring processes that contributed both to the maintenance of kinship ties and to social integration in southern Mesopotamia. Underlying this discussion is the assumption that language traditions were borne by migrating populations of Amorite tribes and neighboring groups. Furthermore, where such groups were settled in significant numbers, the preservation of their linguistic traditions was possible, and this explains the persistence of Amorite language during the early second millennium and its subsequent influence on some later linguistic traditions.

Language and Onomastics

The identification of Amorites during the late third millennium is not to be taken for granted, despite repeated reference to Amorites as significant characters in late third millennium history. Two avenues contribute to the identification of individuals as Amorites among texts: references that either qualify

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[89] See especially Buccellati 1966.
[90] Michalowski 2011: 111–18.

them as mar-tu or the linguistics of their individual names, even when not identified as mar-tu. The first avenue simply employs the Sumerian writing mar-tu to mark individuals, often within lists, as Amorite.[91] Examples of this from the copious quantity of Ur III texts abound.[92] Nevertheless, it is important to note that the practice was far from consistent. For example, we cannot be certain what criteria may have led to the marking of certain individuals' names with foreign groupings, as they seem to function. So, this can hardly serve as a means of identifying all Amorites in Mesopotamian society with certainty.

The second avenue for traditional identification of individuals as Amorite in Sumerian texts is their linguistically Amorite names, which are significant as many individuals are not otherwise designated mar-tu. The identification of Amorites during the Ur III by means of naming conventions involving linguistically Amorite names presupposes that Amorite identity was, in large part, rooted in the use of the Amorite language, if broadly defined. In at least one study of Amorites, only about 38% had Amorite names, while 23% bore Sumerian names, and the remainder bore mixed Akkadian-Amorite (9%), Akkadian (14%), or names in unidentified languages (16%).[93] Names identified as Amorite are usually of one of three forms: (1) a single nominal or verbal element (e.g., *Yaʿqubu*), (2) nominal phrase names (e.g., *Malkī-el*, "My king is El"), or (3) verbal phrase names (e.g., *Yaśmaʿ-il*, "El heard").[94] Linguistic elements of personal names, the identification of Amorite words in lexical lists, and Amorite loanwords form our principal sources for a reconstruction of Amorite.[95]

Amorite stood alongside Sumerian, Akkadian, and Subarean as spoken languages mentioned in late third-millennium sources.[96] Although some debate exists concerning the classification of Amorite, Michael Streck identifies Amorite as a Northwest Semitic (NWS) language and the only NWS language identified for the early second millennium BC.[97] Leonid Kogan likewise sees it as the earliest attested NWS language.[98] Such a classification identifies later NWS languages, such as Ugaritic, Aramean, and Hebrew, as so-called daughter languages of Amorite, perhaps making it or its predecessor one likely candidate for the hypothesized proto-West Semitic language from which such languages grew and which philologists have long sought to

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[91] For examples, see Drehem texts; Hilgert 1998: 336; Hilgert and Reichel 2003: 417.
[92] Buccellati 1966.
[93] See M. Streck and bibliography therein, 2000: 34, §1.18.
[94] Knudsen 1999: 205–8.
[95] For a general discussion of Amorite, see Streck 2011a.
[96] Streck 2000: 76–80; Ziegler and Charpin 2007.
[97] Streck 2011a: 452.
[98] Kogan 2011: 427.

reconstruct.[99] Streck and Kogan are not alone in such a perspective, and it has been recently argued that Ugaritic, for example, is to be identified as a descendant Amorite language.[100] Affinities with Amorite have also been observed for Phoenician and Aramaic.[101]

The existence of Amorite as a distinct spoken language at the end of the third millennium is demonstrated by direct reference to Amorite. In one hymn, the Ur III king, Shulgi, boasts of his facility not only with Sumerian, but also with the Martu language, as well as Elamite, while in another he boasts of his ability to even translate Amorite.[102] As mentioned earlier, similar references to Amorite in the OB Period likewise attest to this language's duration as a spoken language.[103] Amorite was clearly not a dialect, creole, or pigeon spoken by Akkadians or Sumerians but a fully-fledged independent language, the grammar of which has been partially and painstakingly reconstructed.[104]

In sum, neither names nor the ability to speak Amorite can serve as exclusive criteria for identifying Amorites, owing to the fact that such a definition would leave out a great many individuals who through other means may have claimed affiliation or identification with Amorites. Furthermore, it could lead to the inadvertent identification of non-Amorites as Amorites, if they simply bore an Amorite name for another reason or if they could be identified as an Amorite speaker. Naming conventions very often reflect the choices of parents, and polyglots challenge the classification of individuals based on spoken language. Nevertheless, even if we acknowledge that neither speaking Amorite nor taking Amorite names are exclusive criteria for the identification of individuals as Amorites, the persistence of both naming practices and spoken Amorite from the third to the second millennium suggests that they remained among critical cultural traditions for the potential identification of individuals as Amorites. The significance of this point is best illustrated as follows. If we are forced to simply dispense with the identification of individuals as Amorite because these criteria are regarded as inadequate, we are also compelled to eliminate comparable classifications of individuals as Sumerian, Akkadian, Subarean, Elamite, and the like. Beyond their linguistic classifications, such labels also do not designate clearly delimited cultural assemblages, and yet there is no evident reason to doubt that such

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Zadok 1993: 315; Lipiński 1997: 51–55; Bordreuil and Pardee 2009: 19; Pardee 2011a: 461; see also bibliography in Pardee, 2011b: 23.
[101] Röllig 2011: 475; Fales 2011: 557.
[102] Streck 2013: 316.
[103] Ibid.: 318–19.
[104] Streck 2000; Knudsen 2004; see also Gordon 1997 and Buccellati 1997.

designations were meaningful to those who deployed them, even if their meanings varied through time.[105]

Tribal and Political Organization

During the late third millennium several major constituencies, best described as tribes, composed the collective identified as Amorites. As early as the Ur III, a number of individual Amorite tribes are discernible. These include the Amurrum (Sum. mar-tu), Tidnum/Didanum (Sum. lumma), and Yamʾadium as well as Yahmutum/Yamūtum (later Emutbalum?) and Ahbutum.[106] By acknowledging distinct employments of these terms, at least among some texts, it is possible to recognize broader tribal divisions within an emerging collective Amorite identity. The number of tribes identified as Amorite increases with an overall increase in sources during the first half of the second millennium.

To this can be added the distinct possibility that many western communities after the fall of Akkad may have gradually begun to identify as Amorite (i.e., mar-tu), while being identified in Sumerian sources principally with the cities from which these foreigners hailed. Among Ur III texts, a number of individuals from northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant are identified with urban centers later ruled by Amorites in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant, such as Ebla, Byblos, Mari, and Tuttul, even though they are not yet identified as Amorite.[107] The migration of Amorite tribes from the zone of uncertainty during the late third millennium likely forced entire kinship units such as clans to seek to maintain social cohesion by settling together, whether in new settlements or as quarters within existing towns. From Mari west, as postulated in the preceding chapter, such circumstances likely persisted and served as the basis for any connections that can be made between Amorite communities of the mid-third and early second millennium.

Mari, as will be discussed later, may provide the most coherent model for this gradual process, wherein elements of the later Amorite koine appear just after the Akkadian Period. Such processes were likely at work at Ebla, which was eventually unseated in its regional hegemony by the emergence of Yamḫad and thereafter is known to have been inhabited by individuals with Amorite names. These developments in late third-millennium social and political dynamics in the Levant will be discussed later. Nevertheless,

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[105] A more productive avenue for the exploration of the legacy of Amorite language might consider regional variations in Amorite dialects and the potential identification of languages, such as Ugaritic, as descendants from Amorite.

[106] *RIME* 3/2.1.4.1, p. 297; Buccellati 1966: 242–45, 332–36; Marchesi 2006.

[107] Owens 1990.

considerations of Amorite affiliations force us to recognize the significance of such subdivisions and also that the general label "Amorite" effectively constituted a supra-tribal, national, and almost certainly sociopolitical identity by the late third millennium. Consequently, identifications of individuals as mar-tu, which are selectively applied, are analogous to the use of gentilics for other large groups such as Elamites, Subareans, and Gutians.

Kinship

As exposed in the foregoing discussion, real or fictive kinship was at the core of collective Amorite identities. Although it is not possible to fully discern until the early second millennium, it is very likely that fictive kinship played a significant role in the incorporation of individuals and larger collectives such as tribes into a broader Amorite identity in the late third millennium.[108] Even so, two primary lines of evidence reveal the function of traditional means by which kinship was constructed and maintained and the roles that they played in the gradual expansion of Amorite constituencies during the late third millennium: marriage and burial practices.

Marriage

The function of marriage in the maintenance of identity within traditional societies should not be overlooked. Despite the fact that we lack sources to provide the perspective from within Amorite groups during the late third millennium, at the core of marriages were cultural assumptions about the production and role of heirs, kin group stability, and networks of social and economic support.[109] While it would be anachronistic to assume that third-millennium populations were aware of broader societal implications of demographic decline that went beyond their immediate kin groups, the failure to marry likely carried not only a stigma but also material implications for individuals, extended households and, ultimately, for clans and tribes.

The complexities of qualifying personal names with Amorite elements in efforts to identify individuals as Amorites reveal real-world negotiations of social identity and status. These contexts ranged, for example, from intermarriage between Amorites and non-Amorites to births resulting from unions including one or two Amorite parents, to adoption into Amorite households and name changes, as well as the adoption of Amorite names by non-Amorites. Most of these circumstances resulted from marriages, though tracing the evidence is, at present, beyond the scope of available sources. The only circumstances that warrant discussion here are relationships between

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[108] On fictive kinship, see Schloen 2001: 71.
[109] Ibid.: 117–22.

Amorites and non-Amorites since it is likely that intermarriage between Amorites would usually have resulted in offspring being given Amorite names, excepting the possibility of overt efforts to acknowledge – if they were not required to do so legally[110] – that they were living among foreign communities by giving their children Sumerian or Akkadian names. One way or another, such efforts, when not legally required, may often have been intended as overtures of good will and even reflective of positive memories and genuine appreciation for friends and neighbors commemorated through these given names. This likewise opens the door to reciprocal circumstances in which non-Amorites could give their children Amorite names or, perhaps more likely, take second, Amorite names for themselves. The use of two names is a complicated issue, but is in evidence during the OB Period and has been raised for Amorite names during the Ur III.[111] The intermarriage of Amorites, particularly among elites who were engaged in the halls of Ur III power, with non-Amorites is attested among Ur III sources. Members of the military, for example, are implicated in lengthy and elaborate, if opaque, ceremonies.[112]

Burial Practices

Burial practices are also a particularly important avenue for exposing the significance placed on identifying kinship ties from the late third millennium into the early second millennium. As such, burial practices pertain not only to Amorites, but reveal a seeming ever-increasing need to reinforce kinship ties during the second half of the third millennium and early second. Evidence of this includes an increasing prevalence of residential tomb complexes that were constructed under houses.[113] Nicola Laneri notes that,

> the transformation of burial customs, from communal extramural cemetery to residential burials built within private dwellings, should be interpreted as an important indicator of changes that have taken place in the socioeconomic dynamics of a given society. In fact, the necessity of incorporating within a family's house selected dead, thereby transforming them into familial ancestors, appears as pivotal to the reinforcement of the household lineage in moments of dramatic socioeconomic transformation.[114]

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[110] By way of analogy, some modern governments will legally require foreigners to adopt local variants of names. My own brother – born in Argentina – is named Adan, rather than Adam, due to Argentine law.
[111] Michalowski 1995a.
[112] Michalowski 2006: 57.
[113] Laneri 2014.
[114] Laneri 2011: 121.

The transition from extramural burial practices of the mid-third millennium to intramural residential burial practices during the late third millennium reveals a substantial shift in approaches to burial customs. This shift coincides with the dramatic demographic changes in evidence throughout Mesopotamia and the northern Levant during this period, while only at the start of the second millennium in the southern Levant. Intramural residential burials of the third millennium BC are attested at Selenkahiye, Khafajah, Kish, Abu Salabikh, Leilan, and possibly Hadidi.[115] At Titriş Höyük, in southern Anatolia, burial customs also shifted intramurally by the end of the third millennium.[116] Concomitant with the movement toward intramural residential burial, the burial mound tradition was evidently in decline, likely, in part, due to the decline of pastoral nomadism in northern Mesopotamia during this period.[117]

FROM THE GUTIANS TO UR

Having addressed the parameters for the migration and resettlement of Amorites, and the social structure of such groups, it is possible to fully consider their increasingly prominent place within southern Mesopotamian society after the fall of Akkad. The hypothesis that an increasing Amorite presence in southern Mesopotamia in the late third millennium owes a substantial impetus to various waves of refugees from northern Mesopotamia and adjacent regions may be further substantiated through an examination of developments from the Gutian interlude to the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur (2150–2000 BC). In addition to the archaeological evidence for radical urbanization provided earlier, several other features serve to reveal aspects of this process at work. These include artifactual correlates, linguistic data, the construction of monuments, and territorial expansion, all of which are elements of the Gutian and Ur III periods. As will be discussed, conspicuous references to Amorites, particularly during the Ur III Dynasty, also reveal that persistent infiltration of the south by Amorites was accompanied by outright military attacks by separate Amorite factions that increasingly challenged the crown's authority. This occurred at the same time that many Amorites were already socially integrated in the south and occupied a range of positions within Mesopotamian communities.[118]

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[115] See Nishimura 2015: 420.
[116] Laneri 2007.
[117] Cooper 2006: 256.
[118] An apt parallel is found in California where Latin American immigration remains a matter of contention despite historically hosting the largest population of naturalized Latinos in the United States. Furthermore, not all citizens of Latino descent are unilaterally supportive of progressive immigration policies.

The Gutian Interlude and Legitimation

Among the destabilizing elements that brought about the fall of Akkad was the appearance of the little-known Gutians, who filled the power vacuum that followed.[119] Traditionally characterized in literary sources as barbarian invaders from the Zagros Mountains of Iran in the east, Gutians were portrayed in a negative light in the *Curse of Akkad* as early as the Ur III.

> The Gutians, people who do not know permanent settlement,
> With human feelings/way of thinking but with the instincts of a dog,
> body shape like that of a monkey,
> Enlil sent them from the mountains,
> Like locusts they are covering the entire land.[120]

This text not so subtly rejects the legitimacy of the origins of Gutian kingship. While the Gutian Period is not usually discussed in connection with the social integration of Amorites, Gutian rule provided a crucial context for the integration of displaced and immigrant groups in Mesopotamian society in the late third millennium. This was likely also the case for the Gutians themselves, whose ascendance reveals potentially parallel trajectories in forced migration, from the north and east into the Euphrates refugium, as well as participation in Mesopotamian society, including the Akkadian army.

The earliest references to the Gutians are in Old Akkadian (*qutium*) year names during the reign of Sharkalisharri (2175–2150 BC) in which he claims various defeats of the Gutians.[121] Although this does not allow us to determine the basis for their hegemony in Babylonia during the century that followed, their initial appearance is, comparable with that of the Amorites. Thus, their appearance is not associated with the fall of Akkad through their "invasion," but rather more gradually in encounters veritably identical in nature to those experienced by Akkadian kings, especially Sharkalisharri, with Amorite groups. In light of our inabilities to localize a Gutian homeland in the Zagros, it seems reasonable to consider the possibility that the Gutian phenomenon, born to the northeast of Babylonia, mirrored in part that of the Amorites, Hurrians, and Subareans in the west, particularly since the environmental factors also affected parts of the Zagros. Such a hypothesis also provides fertile ground for understanding the social integration and advancement of Amorites in southern Mesopotamia during the Gutian interlude, particularly since long-held local dynasties were now displaced and potentially more open to the advancement of foreigners.[122] Gutian rule very likely functioned, therefore, as a social filter and buffer for

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[119] Van de Mieroop 2003.
[120] See lns. 155–158 in Cooper 1983.
[121] *RIME* 2, p. 183.
[122] Concerning the parallel social transition between Gutians and Amorites, see Steinkeller 2015b: 287–88.

many Amorites already living in southern Mesopotamia, allowing them to be increasingly identified as members of Babylonian communities from this point on, as would be the case during the Ur III. For others it created an age of opportunity, notably to renegotiate their status in Babylonian society.

The Second Dynasty of Lagash (2150–2112 BC), specifically from the rule of Gudea of Lagash – its most famous ruler, also reveals another element that played a vital role in the propagation of identity in the centuries to follow, namely legitimation through monument construction (Figure 3.3). This was

3.3 Statue of Gudea of Lagash.
Photo: Marie-Lan Nguyen. Public domain

not, however, a monumentality of a particularly unique character, but one that largely appropriated and mimicked earlier Akkadian style, whether in inscriptions, cylinder seals, or statuary, and thus mediated these styles through to the Ur III.[123] These actions were intended, arguably, to appropriate classic symbols of power in an all-out effort to attain legitimacy, seeking integration into the halls of Mesopotamian power. After all, Gutian rule before Gudea is characterized as a period of veritable chaos, and this may be physically reflected in a dearth of monuments for the period. Consequently, Gudea emerges as an ideal leader able to carry out the duties of a king – military campaigns, expeditions, construction programs, and the maintenance of social justice – even if we cannot test the veracity of his claims.[124]

Military exploits and expeditions were likewise among the archetypal accomplishments attributed to Gudea, although one eastward campaign is all that is attested: "He defeated the cities of Anshan and Elam and brought the booty therefrom to Ningirsu in his Eninnu."[125] Gudea's military exploits, like his assertions about propagating social justice, fell under his role as "shepherd" to his subjects, describing himself on more than one occasion as "the shepherd chosen in Ningirsu's heart" and "true shepherd."[126] The epithet, which was not common in earlier traditions, assumes a prominent place, positively characterizing Gudea's leadership, which was important in light of his foreign roots. This image would go on to become a central facet of the identity of OB kings during the early second millennium. We may therefore wonder whether the uptick agropastoralist populations, whether Amorites, Subareans, or others from the zone of uncertainty, contributed to an increasing importance attached to this image of a king as shepherd.

Building programs are an understandably critical element in royal legitimation, if for no reason other than that they demonstrated the monarch's ability to mobilize a workforce, with the result quite often of leaving behind an enduring reminder of the king's and his heirs' legitimate place as ruler. Concerning the significance of Gudea's building efforts, we can consider Steinkeller's observations for the Ur III, when similar exploits were undertaken:

> National building projects were an extremely important tool of political and cultural integration, in that they helped to create a community and interdependence between different regions of the state. As people from all over the country spent extensive periods of time working and living

[123] Di Ludovico 2008: 325.
[124] Edzard 1997: 28.
[125] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB., vi 64–69.
[126] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StD., i 11–16; 3/1.1.7.CylA, xiv 5–6.

together, they not only identified with the project itself, but they also came to think of themselves as fellow members of a united Babylonia.[127]

He further notes that such programs could "create a sense of unity [that] must have been one of the main political objectives of the kings of Ur," a suggestion that could be equally extended to Gudea's efforts. In Ur, this is evident in the participation of individuals from "all walks of life," as well as of different social statuses from various supervisors (ugula) and scribes, to shepherds, craftsmen, cooks, and even fishermen. During the Ur III, no profession, and probably no adult, was excluded from contribution to corvée, even if they did not always do the work themselves.[128]

Gudea constructed a monumental temple to Ningirsu requiring the shipment of timbers from the Amanus Mountains (Amanum), and explicitly noting the importance of "opening roads" to the Upper Sea (i.e., Mediterranean Sea) in order to make this possible,[129] which by implication at least suggests that such routes had become largely inactive after the fall of Akkad. Gudea also "brought alabaster blocks from Tidanum, the mountain range of the Martu, using them to make [text broken] (for Ningirsu), and he mounted them in the House as 'skull-crashers.'"[130] He also constructed temples to the gods Bau, Dumuzi, Enki, Gatumdu, Igalim, Inanna, and a number of others.[131] He hauled stone from "Umanum, the mountain range of Menua, and from Basar, the mountain range of the mar-tu (ḫur-sag mar-tu-ta) and he used them to make stelae (na-du-a-šè)."[132] Some of these actions, aside from serving as archetypal kingly acts and revealing the distant sources from which he procured elements for his construction projects also suggest a potentially collaborative relationship with local inhabitants. In the two instances cited here these included Amorite groups in the vicinity of mountain ranges with specifically Amorite identifications: Basar, upstream along the Euphrates, and Tidanum, the location of which is uncertain. A further observation is that the particular type of monument associated with the expedition to Basar is the stone stele, a monument type seen with increasing frequency in southern Mesopotamia because of its association with the quarrying of stone types identified with specific regions. That said, only a handful of the many monuments erected by Gudea were stelae, and it is remarkable that the only direct references to the procurement of stone for stelae construction are directly tied to Amorite lands.

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[127] Steinkeller 2015a: 143.
[128] Ibid.: 172–73.
[129] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB, lns. v, 21–vi, 2.
[130] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB, lns. vi 13–20.
[131] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.16; 1.7.1, etc.
[132] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB, lns. vi 3–12.

Gudea's significance to later traditions would have been muted due to the short duration of the dynasty were it not for the fact that so many examples of the distinctive style of his statuary survive (Figure 3.3). In these, the adaptation of earlier iconographic traditions is again evident. Central to this program were statues of himself and a few of his successors that clearly relied on an Akkadian style.[133] References to these statues in his inscriptions allow us to consider their production a deliberate element within a program of monumental endeavors such as temple construction and the erection of commemorative stelae.[134] Together, these monuments created a landscape of power to be appropriated and emulated by successive dynasts. From Gudea's statuary we also see the first evidence of a consistent style of dress that would come to dominate representations of Ur III and later OB rulers.[135] Among these elements is the brimmed hat associated with rulers.

Gudea might also be considered unique in being the first Sumerian king known to have promoted social justice. He extols his social achievements, such as limiting debt collection, mistreatment, and abuse, claiming that he "made things function as they should for his lord Ningirsu."[136] In the wake of the possibly still unfolding late third-millennium forced migrations, there is, however, little reason to doubt the necessity for the emphasis Gudea placed on social justice. As even much later biblical passages concerned with refugees reveal, refugees were dependent and vulnerable, and therefore prone to exploitation. Laws were essential to their protection, which could also contribute to their loyalty to the regime. These same laws also afforded protection to the social status of other groups, including elites. Even if the vast number of cases in ancient Mesopotamia reveal a limited referencing of state laws in connection with adjudications, royal law collections provided a backstop or assurance that justice, as defined by royal intervention, would be provided when required.

Despite that the Gutian interlude was a short-lived phenomenon, Gudea's reign, as much as the late reign of Shulgi during the similarly short-lived Ur III, played a pivotal role in molding Akkadian archetypes into models for Ur III rulers, and especially for later Amorite rulers. Programs in monument construction, including palaces, temples, and stele, and their provisioning with various ornate accoutrements were evidently central to a projection of kingship among the increasingly diverse constituencies of southern Mesopotamia, which included Sumerians, Akkadians, Gutians, Amorites, Hurrians, Subareans, Elamites, and still other little-known groups. In a world of political,

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[133] Frankfort 1970: 93–98.
[134] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB., vii 10–13.
[135] Lamia al Gailani 2012: 390–92.
[136] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.StB., v 5–14, vi 29–43.

TABLE 3.1. *Reigns of the kings of Ur III. Dates follow conventional chronology with Ur-Nammu as dynastic founder (after Kuhrt 1995:63)*

Ruler	Dates BC	Total Years
Utuhegal	2119–2113	7
Ur-Nammu	2112–2095	18
Shulgi	2094–2047	48
Amar-Sin	2046–2038	9
Shu-Sin	2037–2027	9
Ibbi-Sin	2026–2004?	25

social, economic, and environmental instability, these monuments and the socioeconomic structures they embodied projected continuity, legitimacy, and stability.

The Ur III State and Foreigners

Out of the opaque landscape after the fall of Akkad and in the years surrounding Gudea's reign, the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 BC) took shape with the reign of Ur-Nammu (2112–2095; Table 3.1). His origins are entirely obscure and his rise out of the Gutian Period was likely not dissimilar to Gudea's own rise to power, percolating up as a local ruler and strongman.[137] His earliest title was simply "king of Ur," but ruling for eighteen years and as the dynasty's founder, he is best known for his building programs. His year names reference his accomplishments, including the expulsion of the Gutians.[138] They also highlight significant construction during his reign, including the wall of Ur, temples at Eridu, Ku'ar, Ur, and Nippur, and the ziqqurat at Ur as well as canals. These accomplishments were also inscribed on stele, commemorative bricks, foundation tablets, door sockets, cone inscriptions, and clay cylinders,[139] which Michalowski describes as a "network of elements" constituting a "visual language of power."[140] Put more simply, they publicly legitimated Ur-Nammu's kingship during the late third millennium, in ways not foreign to the Akkadian or Gutian kings who preceded him. However, these elements had now achieved both a formality and monumentality not previously witnessed.

Beyond projecting legitimacy, monuments were also significant in one other very important respect, namely their function as public works projects

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[137] For discussion of his reign, see Frayne 1997: 9–20.
[138] Ibid.: 10–11.
[139] For example, *RIME* 3/2.1.1.22–1.40.
[140] Michalowski 2013: 173.

that employed skilled craftspersons but, more importantly, thousands of laborers on massive projects. Thus, these monument-building efforts bound large cadres of dependents to ambitious rulers. In this light, it may be little wonder that following Gudea's reign the Ur III Dynasty was unrivaled in its monumental construction projects and the employment, on an unprecedented level, of labor en masse. Ur-Nammu (2112–2095 BC), foremost among Ur III rulers, established for himself an enduring legacy in his patronage of monument construction. As mentioned, among these monuments are a surprising number of ziqqurats, palaces, fortresses, fortification walls, and canals, particularly in such a relatively short period. Concerning these projects, however, one thing is certain: Ur's rulers did not build these monuments themselves. Rather, they were constructed by means of an extensive conscription of labor that has, if ironically, become a mainstay of the study of Sumerian texts in this period, albeit with only limited consideration of the broader social context that permitted, encouraged, and enabled these undertakings.
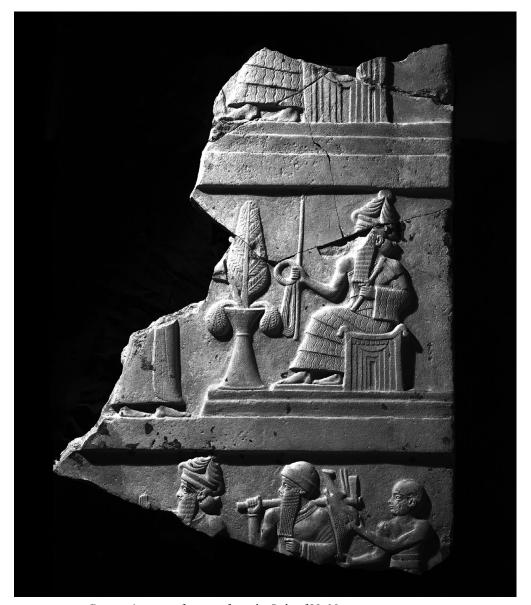
Stele, known as *naduašè* in Sumerian (Akk. *sikkanu* and *narû*),[141] were among the monuments that played an instrumental role in the Ur III program of royal legitimation,[142] establishing a pattern that lasted until the end of the OB Period. Indeed, an entire body of literature referred to as *narû* literature is modeled off of the early practice of erecting such stelae.[143] As such, it appears to have built upon the earlier tradition of Akkadian stelae, examples of which include those of Naram-Sin and Manishtushu. As physical reminders of a king's accomplishments, monuments like those of the Ur III perpetuated an emerging stereotype for late third-millennium kings that was promulgated through iconography such as the Stele of Ur-Nammu (Figure 3.4). In it the king is seen receiving kingship in the symbols of the rod and the measuring line, likely symbols of his role as builder of the sanctuaries of the gods.[144] In this the king is, in one sense, fundamentally shown as the divinely sanctioned ruler and shepherd of his people. The king's receipt of kingship from the gods would become instrumental in the presentation of rulers henceforward, particularly among Amorite kings in the years after the fall of Ur, and the image is largely repeated, for example, atop Hammurapi's stele, on which his laws were inscribed. Such presentation scenes functioned as a genre in which a king could be portrayed as legitimate, particularly to the illiterate, the majority of

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[141] For *narû*, see *CAD* N/1. p. 364–367; variously defined as a "1. Stone monument inscribed with laws and regulations, 2. Boundary stone, 3. Memorial monument set up by a king." Concerning *sikkanu*, see Durand 2005.

[142] Suter 2010: 332–35.

[143] See Jonker 1995: 92–95.

[144] Suter 2010: 333.

3.4 Presentation scene fragment from the Stele of Ur–Nammu.
Courtesy of the Penn Museum, image 141417 and object B16676

Mesopotamia's inhabitants. Steven Garfinkle has taken this one step farther in convincingly arguing for understanding the entire kingdom of Ur as a sheep–fold, under the Ur III king, in particular Shulgi, the shepherd.[145]

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[145] Garfinkle forthcoming, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold: Frontier Strategy under the Third Dynasty of Ur, A View from the Center" in *Proceedings of the 62nd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale: Ur in the Twenty-First Century*.

Perhaps in this context it is unsurprising that the Ur III state has been referred to as a "patrimonial state."[146] At the center of such a state was the king, whose symbolic role as head or father of the state was proclaimed in royal inscriptions, through seal iconography, and presentation scenes atop stelae. Although it can be argued that such structures may have been in place as early as the Akkadian Period, the Ur III state provides the most robust model for the institution of kingship during the transition between the third and the second millennium. "Mutual rights and obligations" held together the nested households that made up the hierarchal structure of the Ur III state. The Ur III royal household was evidently tied by marriage to "the kings of Mari, Simanum, Ansan, Sikri, Zabsali, Adamsah, Marhasi, and other places."[147]

The Ur III state reveals the first evidence for a system of land tenure by the royal household and its dependents. Agricultural land was held and worked for the king, often by individuals working for members of the military establishment.[148] Newly established towns were seemingly founded as royal settlements, often with foreigners such as Amorites or Hurrians, revealing a mechanism of both economic and social integration of foreign elements during the Ur III.[149] An extensive set of dependents, free persons responsible for providing corvée labor, were among the king's household. In turn, dependents "possessed full social, economic, and legal rights" and could expect "material goods, prestige or protection" in return for providing for the labor requested by the king.[150] It is unnecessary to delve deeply into the various terms for the levels of this structure, except to note that among the dependents of the king's household in the Ur III state were a range of military personnel, among whom foreign elements such as Amorites, Hurrians, and Elamites were included. This structure, and the associated institutions, appear to have persisted into the early second millennium BC, and were thus formative in the transition from the Ur III to the establishment of city-states at the start of the second millennium. The primary products of large state corvée labor projects were fortification construction, temple building, canal systems, and work on military expeditions, all of which loom large among the iconic deeds of OB rulers. It is in the context of extensive construction projects during the Ur III to which we will return to consider their relationship to foreign sources of labor.

Our sources reveal the existence of diverse communities of foreigners from across the ancient Near East residing in Sumer. Representatives from different Syrian towns including Ebla and Mari resided in Sumer for years, sometimes

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[146] Schloen 2001: 262–67; Steinkeller 2013: 350.
[147] Michalowski 2006: 59.
[148] Steinkeller 2013: 353–56.
[149] Heimpel 2009.
[150] Steinkeller 2013: 350.

decades, at a time.[151] One such case includes twenty-three so-called men from Mari, who likely represent various elites from the city of Mari who resided in Sumer, since they cannot be unequivocally identified as members of the royal family at Mari.[152] The "men from Mari," who are likely referenced in other contexts but without designation as being "from Mari,"[153] exposes the issue that foreigners may not have been consistently marked as such in all instances. Thus, it does not seem to have been the case that foreign individuals were identified as such in Ur III records totally consistently. However, the repeated marking of some individuals as foreigners makes it possible to deduce the likely reasons for the use of this feature.

The practice of marking individuals as belonging to one or another foreign population, as with the "men of Mari" discussed previously, likely hinged on tracking persons of interest to the state, such as professional soldiers and mercenaries, dignitaries, and merchants. A discussion of Amorite identity in the late third millennium centers on the simple recognition that – with the exception of groups that were already integrated into Sumerian communities and thus indistinguishable from their neighbors – individuals distinctly quali-fied as Amorites in southern Mesopotamia were being intentionally marked in texts as foreigners. Thus, the use of the label mar-tu, as with distinct labels for Subareans, Hurrians, Elamites, and Meluheans, was intended to highlight the foreignness of an individual, which doubtlessly also created suspicion of them.[154] This was not something new, but rather reflected circumstances carried over from the Akkadian Period when similar practices existed, as discussed in the preceding chapter. As the following discussion reveals, many Amorite individuals were present in post-Akkadian, late third-millennium Sumerian society, and relatively few of them were marked in texts as mar-tu. When they are marked, it is likely that other reasons governed these choices, and it seems of little surprise that such labels marked individuals as outsiders primarily from the state's perspective and for its purposes.[155] The employment of such labels served therefore to effectively identify persons of interest to the state, fundamentally in order that their dealings could be closely monitored. In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that the elite guards of Ur III rulers feature the highest correspondence between their linguistically Amorite names and their deliberate identification as mar-tu, to which I return later. They could be seen to pose considerable risk to the security of the Ur III state through their economic, social, and political dealings within

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[151] Owens 1990.
[152] Michalowski 1995a: 185.
[153] Ibid.: 187.
[154] Limet 1972.
[155] Buccellati 1966: 281–82.

the state's territories.[156] However, this is only one aspect of the references to such individuals.

Another aspect to these references were efforts by states, as for Ur, to incorporate foreign individuals into the state apparatus. Steven Garfinkle observes that beyond the role such attestations played in confirming the power of the state, they also "bear witness to the continuing significance of local and regional social, economic, and political networks." In this regard, Amorites are but one among many constituencies identified in these texts. He goes on to note that,

> Perhaps the most important aspect of textual production was its ability to define, and sometimes to create, new social networks. Different parts of the state could regularly be brought together in texts in ways that they often could not be brought together in reality. The different communities were represented on the texts by local elites who sought participation and inclusion in the new royal elite, and that participation was registered in the texts.[157]

Thus, references to foreigners among Ur III state texts are not to be read as evidence of the domination of such groups, but rather more realistically, as efforts to incorporate different communities into the state's functioning and thus pacify them. As will be shown, such efforts may have been successful in the latter endeavor in ways that these late third-millennium rulers could not have even foreseen. But it is also clear that only a limited number of such individuals are referenced in these texts and that many others lived out their lives in relative obscurity.

Maintaining Social Order

In the mixed cultural setting of southern Mesopotamia, which was increasingly restive after the fall of Akkad and in which foreign elements were a regular element of the social fabric, the need for a clearly articulated framework for social justice, the maintenance of social status, and the protection of loyal citizens would have been increasingly necessary. Indeed, already during Gudea's reign, efforts were made to address such concerns. Social order during the Ur III can, to a large extent, be articulated by the *Laws of Ur-Nammu*, although some suggest they actually originated with his son Shulgi.[158] This, still fragmentary, compilation of laws is preserved among several collections of clay tablets and remains the earliest attested collection of such laws in the Near East. As such, it is antecedent to later legal traditions that were most likely patterned

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[156] Limet 1972: 132.
[157] Garfinkle 2015: 152.
[158] Roth 1997: 13

on this late third-millennium model, even if we cannot be entirely sure that it is the earliest of such collections of law. Recent fragments of the laws, which are dated to the Ur III and therefore are not OB copies, suggest that the laws were displayed on a monument, likely a stele, and in this respect also a precursor to the display of Hammurapi's laws.[159]

The prologue to the text provides the setting for its content:

> At that time the *nisku*-people had control of the fields, the chief sea-captain had control of trade, [the herdsm]an had control over those who [held back cattle], held back [sheep] and [held back] asses. [At that time, I, Ur-Nammu], [migh]ty [man], [king of Ur, king of the land of Sumer] and Akkad, by [the might of the god] Nanna, [m]y [lord], and by the [true [command of the god Utu], did indeed establish justice [in the land]. I did indeed return. ... Freedom was established for those conducting trade (free from) the chief sea-captain, for those who held back cattle, held back sheep, and held back asses (free from) the herdsman, and for the Akkadians and foreign[ers](?) in the land of Sum[er and Akkad].
>
> ... The orphan was not handed over to the rich (man). The widow was not handed over to the mighty (man). The man of one shekel was not handed over to the man of one mina. The man of one sheep was not handed over to the man of one ox.[160]

An extension of his efforts evidently also included the establishment of standardized weights and measures, which would have had significant implications for "fair trade" and the avoidance of corruption in the context of Babylonia's multicultural setting in the late third millennium.

Many parts of the inscription read like statements made only decades earlier by Gudea, who "established justice in the land," and like later OB laws. Because only forty laws are preserved on three fragmentary tablets it is, however, impossible to be sure of the extent of the coverage of these laws. Still, they are remarkably like the much better-known Laws of Hammurapi from the OB Period and may have served as a prototype to that and other OB legal traditions. While some differences remain between these and later law collections, the parallels in language and structure are surprising. As with later collections, the Laws of Ur-Nammu adopted the predictable "if ... then" structure to enumerate legal consequences for actions, intended to remedy a selection of circumstances. Although it is always difficult to reconcile actual practices with such encoded legal systems, the laws reveal a well-defined social order, confirmed through other texts, comparable to that known during later periods with free persons (lú), which included a range of individuals, and both

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[159] Civil 2011: 226
[160] *RIME* 3/2.1.1.20, lns. 87–124, 162–171.

enslaved men and women (arad and géme).[161] Missing at this stage, however, is any status that seems comparable to the *muškenum* or so-called dependent during the OB Period.

Conveying that Ur-Nammu was the maintainer of social order was doubtless the principal intent of these laws. The social context of the laws is now made clearer perhaps through translation of a more complete copy of the prologue of the laws of Ur-Nammu:

> If somebody bought a slave *during the reign of the Gutians* [emphasis added], and if that slave (later) is detained by another person, then the owner of the slave (i.e., the buyer) needs only to take an assertory oath, and he will take the slave back. If that buyer dies, either his wife or his child or his witness will take an assertory oath, and she/he will take the slave back. But if somebody bought a slave since the (beginning of the) reign of Urnamma, the king of justice elevated in the land by Nanna, (and if that slave later is detained by another person), the owner of the slave (i.e., the buyer) (will produce) either the respective [(sale) document] or the guarantor. If he does not produce it or him, he is a thief.[162]

These lines provide an indication of the broader context for the laws and the need for continuity of economic (and social) transactions, particularly during the volatile years preceding the Ur III Dynasty's foundation.

Based on the evidence for law cases during the Ur III, the Laws of Ur-Nammu should be understood as a reflection of royal prerogative in dispensing justice – a last resort of sorts – rather than representing a code to be interpreted and enforced. Perhaps on the occasion that local officials presiding over cases could not come to a decision, the potential outcomes of royal intervention were stipulated. Many cases, involving divorce, inheritance, mercantile transactions, damages, and civil or criminal cases seem to have been litigated for years, although adjudicated by seemingly ad hoc groupings of "governors and many members of a number of networks, including urban, rural, and military," with no enforcement of the sort described in the Laws of Ur-Nammu.[163] The unique aspect of these laws is that they represent the earliest attested collection, with no earlier evidence to date for such efforts to canonize a legal tradition. Later on, OB legal traditions reveal an adoption of similar conventions, sometimes even of nearly identical laws.[164] Whether or not such laws were intended to be accessed on a public stele, as was the case for Hammurapi's laws and as is attested among the OA letters, remains unknown.

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[161] Roth 1997: 14.
[162] Steinkeller 2015b: 284 Compare to translation by Civil 2011: 251–52.
[163] Culbertson 2016: 192–92.
[164] See Fleishman 2005.

While merchants (Sum. dam-gar) are not a subject of the preserved laws of Ur-Nammu, attention is called to them in the prologue, and owing to the trust placed in them, their role in the social order of the Ur III was exceedingly significant. Steven Garfinkle observes that:
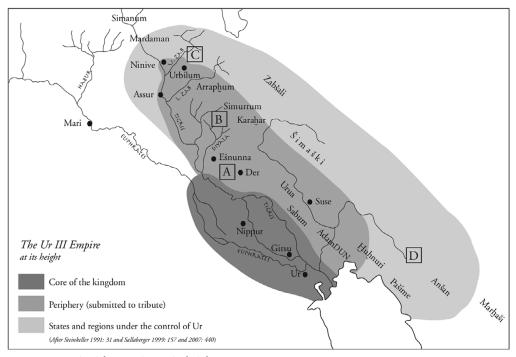
> The activity of merchants is usually an indication of the limits of state authority and the need for the crown to accommodate regional socio-economic elites. The merchants operated throughout the state, though, and this made them, along with soldiers, some of the most prominently attested statewide actors.[165]

Among the state duties of merchants was what is known as "tax farming," requiring that these merchants collected bala taxes for the Ur III state.[166] The effectiveness of this system appears to have been that these merchants were members of merchant guilds organized by family firms, which Garfinkle concludes were "preexisting structures" upon which the Ur III state depended.[167] In a very real sense, the socioeconomic prominence of merchants, who were members of prominent kin groups within their communities, reveals an entrenched dependence on extended families in the de facto administration of different cities throughout southern Mesopotamia. This then parallels perhaps the dependence on local officials, as for example tribal elders, for the settling of legal disputes rather than dependence on state laws. Garfinkle sums up the overall significance of the role of merchants within the operation of the Ur III state as follows:

> When the kings of Ur took control of southern Mesopotamia, they encountered numerous social structures within the provinces of their new state. In their efforts to provide an economic foundation for their rule and to direct the produce of society towards the crown, they relied on the cooperation of these preexisting structures. It was true not only at the elite level, but all the way down to the craftsman and traders. Significantly, though military power became centralized in early Mesopotamia, the reins of the economy remained somewhat decentralized.[168]

While the high-profile nature of merchants during the OB Period is well known, the evidence from Ur reveals the fundamental importance that large kin groups played in the integrity and stability of social order, political power, and economic systems during the late third and into the early second millennium. We will return to this theme in a discussion of the role of trade in the

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[165] Garfinkle 2013: 159.
[166] Garfinkle 2010: 188–89.
[167] Ibid.: 193–94.
[168] Ibid.: 194.

3.5 Ur III territorial expansion at its height.
Source: Lafont 2009: fig. 1. Reproduced courtesy of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative

expansion of Amorite hegemony during the early second millennium in the next chapter.

Wars, Walls, and Ur's Expansion

While Ur-Nammu's exploits in war were not regarded as signature achievements of his reign – he may even have died on the battlefield[169] – the ascension of Shulgi (2094–2047 BC) to the throne ushered in an age of military exploits and expansion of the state during his forty-six year reign (Figure 3.5). A continuation of the wars against the Gutians, started by his father Ur-Nammu, appears to have been fundamental to the consolidation of his rule and served to expand Ur's control over a much larger region. Wars brought about not only a subjugation of rivals but introduced a steady flow of capital in the form of tribute and booty as well as labor in the form of war captives. Both tribute and captives made possible the continuation of building programs. While these projects required the management of vast labor pools, they also created opportunities for further integration of different groups into the state and Babylonian society.

[169] Frayne 1997: 19–20.

As year names and inscriptions reveal, Shulgi continued temple and town construction projects, but he also restored roads and built defensive walls or chains of fortresses.[170] In addition to these building programs, A. R. George suggests that Shulgi also may have constructed the first distinct buildings for scribal schools, the Sumerian é-du-ba-a, which were patronized by Ur III kings and by the kings of Isin perhaps as much as 150 years after the fall of Ur. Only later, during the OB Period, this institution was almost wholly moved into private residences of wealthy patrons, and thus appear to have no longer been housed in a distinct building.[171]

The many monuments central to Ur III identity, particularly those dated to the reigns of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi, profoundly entrenched the ideals of kingship, cult, and social order during the late third millennium and, evidently, for centuries thereafter. They served as centerpieces in a quest for legitimacy during a period fraught with political turmoil and social unrest, which relied on evoking memories of power and stability through traditional Babylonian monuments. Collectively these symbols represent the residue of inscribed practices, which left their traces in the material records of Mesopotamia. As such, they served as ideal types for the legitimation of kingship, cult, and social order following the collapse of the Ur III state. The Ur III paradigm is therefore critical to understanding how and why these symbols were appropriated by OB states, often under Amorite aegis, during the early centuries of the second millennium.

Shulgi, like Gudea, is extoled as shepherd in a hymn wherein Nanna implores Enlil to select Shulgi as king of Sumer and Ur, revealing but perpetuating the importance of this epithet for Ur III rulers:

> It is the king, shepherd Shulgi, the true shepherd endowed with beauty,
>
> Decree a good destiny (for him) in order that he might make the foreign land(s) bow down to me.[172]

One of only two statues of Shulgi, in fact, shows him holding a kid, revealing this as not only a literary but also visual archetype.[173] Otherwise, Ur III iconography of kingship generally revived many Akkadian elements.[174] Along with the images of Ur-Nammu as king, the portrayal of Ur III rulers such as Shulgi bridge the depictions of rulers from Gudea to the OB Period.

Alongside the archetypal language and symbols of kingship, Shulgi likewise engaged in extensive dynastic propaganda. An index of the legitimation of Sumerian dynasties was inclusion within the so-called king-list tradition, a

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[170] Ibid.: 91–110.
[171] George 2005: 133–35.
[172] Shulgi F hymn, quoted from Frayne 1997: 92.
[173] Suter 2010: 322–23, fig. 3.
[174] Ibid.

genre of cuneiform documents that listed a series of succeeding dynasties of Sumer. In this tradition, divine right of rule was seen as bestowed from heaven upon these dynasties, and the list therefore served to set a living dynasty within a long list of earlire divinely sanctioned dynasties in southern Mesopotamia, thereby further legitimating their rule. As such, these lists are only useful as historical sources up to a point. Many dynasties are, of course, not included within these lists. More importantly, however, they reveal a deliberate mechanism employed by these dynasties to project their legitimacy. The most famous of these is the so-called Sumerian King List, which was a product of the Isin Dynasty during the nineteenth century BC. Until recently, it was thought that the Isin copy was the earliest such document within this tradition, making the genre an OB one in which the kings of Isin and other later kings sought to place their dynasties in succession to the Third Dynasty of Ur. In light of the recognition of the potential processes at work, it may come as little surprise that the earliest known example of the list originates instead from the Ur III. It likely dates to the reign of Shulgi, although it is also possible that the genre originated as early as the Akkadian Period.[175] However early the genre may turn out to be, the ideological role of the list was clear during the Third Dynasty of Ur, when it served as an element within Shulgi's own efforts to legitimate his rule.

Shulgi's building projects, which were also a continuation of Ur–Nammu's efforts, certainly also served to reify his status as "shepherd" over his people. His year names celebrate temple and palace construction, the restoration of cities such as Dēr, the construction of highway way-stations, the creation of gardens, the establishment of colonies, the procurement of cedars, and the construction of defenses.[176] The so-called Wall of the Land (Sum. bàd mada) is of particular interest in possible connection with unrest created by Amorites in border areas, albeit far from certain that it should be associated with Amorites specifically. This feature was worked on during Shulgi's thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth years, as his year names reveal, following raids he made on the Amorites. Michalowski correctly observes, however, that the wall's association with Amorites is not explicit in any text, that the wall has grown in scholarly imagination since its first discussion, and that, at best, it was likely a "line of discontinuous fortifications."[177] Unfortunately, in the absence of any clear physical evidence for a contiguous wall, a grouping of fortresses makes the most sense of the first challenge, which is posed by the semantic range of the term (Sum. bàd; Akk. *duru*) that can refer to a wall, fortress, fortification, or

[175] Steinkeller 2003; Marchesi 2010.
[176] Frayne 1997: 92–110.
[177] Michalowski 2011: 122–29.

something serving like a wall, such as a chain of fortresses.[178] While we cannot locate the construction of Shulgi's wall or details regarding the effort, nor be sure how it was intended to function, owing to the limits of sources at this point in Shulgi's reign, the wall's inclusion in two year names during his reign make it a significant project that cannot be simply dismissed. Taking these issues into consideration, Michalowski suggests translating the expression bàd mada more simply as "fortifications of the frontier/territory," though to which frontier or territory this refers cannot be adequately clarified. Nevertheless, the construction of this feature was followed, during Shulgi's fortieth year (2055 BC), by registrations of booty from a raid on Amorite land (kur mar-tu): "First reference to booty from Amorite land."[179] This apparently occurred again in the fifth year of Amar-Sin (2042 BC), and in both instances tribute was rendered in livestock.

It was also during Shulgi's reign that, perhaps unsurprisingly, a sea change in labor accounting (i.e., taxation) took place.[180] As this system reveals, careful records were kept of laborers, state assets, and the individual into whose care both were entrusted with the explicitly stated expectation of production of so many units. Although one may be tempted, as many have in fact, to regard this as the height of efficiency, in truth it demonstrates the excessive expectations for labor placed upon individuals and a heightened degree of suspicion that produce, goods, and labor could be syphoned off by members of a large cadre of those engaged in the management of this system. Robert Englund notes, for example, that even "expected performance" was recorded in the column of debits within these texts.[181] Furthermore, he observes that:

> We know from other texts the serious consequences such an uninter-rupted control of work crew deficits could have for the foreman and his household. These deficits had obviously to be repaid at all costs. Upon the death of a foreman, the state had first rights to the assets of his estate. This meant that in the absence of other moveable goods, the members of his family and of his household (chattel slaves) themselves were trans-ferred into state ownership as members.[182]

He observes further that "standardized equivalencies" were employed to simplify debit accounting, usually in grain or a number of days of labor still

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[178] A similar challenge is posed concerning the identification of the "Wall of the Ruler," which was constructed by Middle Kingdom pharaohs explicitly to keep Asiatics out of the Delta. It is far more likely that this was a chain of fortresses in the northern Sinai functioning as a gauntlet along the main road to the Levant.

[179] Sallaberger 2007: 447.

[180] Englund 1991: 258.

[181] Ibid.: 259.

[182] Ibid.: 267–68.

owed to the administration, irrespective of the type of work done,[183] and there was rarely a twelve-month period during which an individual was on the plus side, with a credit rather than debit. Even days off were carefully accounted for.[184] Ur III recording conventions therefore reveal a tight-fisted administration that is rarely so clearly documented in antiquity. Were the Ur III to be read as a halcyon of efficiency, we should expect to see these methods perpetuated and imitated whenever possible. However, in actuality they are the exception in Mesopotamian accounting systems and labor practices; this was not how to construct a sustainable state administration. Nevertheless, it was in such a context that Amorites and so many others played a role in the bala tax system for which the Ur III Dynasty was known.

As it concerns royal mortuary customs, Shulgi provides the first, if limited, glimpse into Ur III burial complexes. The mausoleum of Shulgi (cf. "Dungi") and Amar-Sin (cf. "Bur-Sin") may provide a direct insight into the appropriation of earlier archetypes of royal burial, though the royal burials of Akkadian kings remain unlocated. Although there is no evidence that the Ur III burial complexes were located directly underneath the palace complex, which was located to the northwest of these features at Ur, Woolley notes that these structures shared remarkable similarities with domestic complexes.[185] As such these late third-millennium funerary buildings reveal an interest in burial complexes of a type that become increasingly common during the early second millennium, namely the residential funerary chamber.

Tidnumite Incursions

During Shu-Sin's reign (2037–2027 BC), it is clear that Amorite territorial transgressions, specifically by the Tidnum, had become a major if not the principal problem the Ur III state faced from Amorites, thus implicating them as a factor in the drawn-out decline of the state. This then may largely explain the animus behind characterizations of Amorites more generally during the Ur III, especially since there is little indication that such characterizations were intended to include Amorites who already inhabited towns throughout the south. During Shu-Sin's reign, efforts to contain members of the tribe of Tidnum involved the construction of a defensive wall in the north and possibly the repatriation of captives, as one inscription makes explicit.

> when he built the Amorite wall (bàd mar-dú) [called] "It Keeps Tidnum at a Distance" (*mu-ri-iq-ti-di-ni-im*), and returned the "foot" of the Amorites (gìr mar-dú) to their land.[186]

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[183] Ibid.: 269.
[184] Ibid.: 278.
[185] Woolley 1974: 2–3, 22.
[186] *RIME* 3/2.1.4.17, p. 328.

These lines form one of the bases for the traditional elision of Amorite (i.e., mar-tu) and Tidnumite (i.e., ti-di-ni-im) identities. However, read as suggested earlier in this work, Tidnum should be viewed as one tribal constituency with a broader collective Amorite identity. This inscription, therefore, seems to call attention to the fact that Tidnumite elements are the specific social group seen as making these incursions. If it is not simply dismissed as hyperbole, Shu-Sin's statement seems to imply material efforts to forcibly return undesired Tidnumite immigrants, an indirect witness to continued Amorite infiltration of southern Mesopotamia in what were considered to be significant numbers.

Interestingly, the wall's name is Akkadian, despite its reference within a Sumerian source. In a letter from Sharrum-bani to Shu-Sin, the former requests reinforcements to deal with the continuation of the wall's construction while engaging Amorites and their allies, who were actively opposing these endeavors:

> Speak to Šu-sin, my king: saying (the words of) the prefect Šarrum-bani, your servant: You commissioned me to carry out construction on the great fortifications of "Muriq-Tidnim" and presented your views to me as follows: "The Amorites have repeatedly raided the frontier territory." You commanded me to rebuild the fortifications, to cut off their access, and thus to prevent them from repeatedly overwhelming the fields through a break (in the defenses) between the Tigris and and the Euphrates. ... When I had been working on the fortifications that then measured 26 *danna* long (269 km), after having reached (the area) between the two mountain ranges, the Amorite camped in the mountains turned his attention to my building activities. (The leader of) Simurum came to his aid, and he went out against me between the mountain ranges of Ebih to do battle. And therefore I, even though I could not *spare* corvée workers (for fighting), went out to confront him in battle.[187]

Sharrum-bani, however, goes on to complain that those from whom he has attempted to levy troops on behalf of his efforts are concerned, themselves, for the defense of their own towns against Amorite raiding. Such a correspondence and the specific details associated with it would seem to expose real concerns, namely efforts to check aggression by some Amorite groups. Nevertheless, care should be taken in suggesting that Amorites were active on all borders of the state of Ur, even if this information seems to suggest that the state regarded its sovereignty at risk. Recognizing that these texts refer to one specific region, however, allows us to more accurately qualify the actual threat that external Amorite groups posed to certain regions, over and against

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[187] *CKU* 18; Michalowski 2011: 399.

those who were integrated members of Ur III society. Despite purported concerns over unchecked infiltration by Amorites during Shu-Sin's reign, it may also be the case that deportations to southern Mesopotamia of those captured by Shu-Sin, notably in connection with his Simanum campaign, brought unfriendly elements closer to the Ur heartland.[188] Although Amorites appear as allies of Ur's enemies early on, it is unclear whether the later deportations also included Amorites.

No remains of "Muriq-Tidnim" have been discovered, despite various suggestions regarding its identification with existing features.[189] Michalowski has treated the subject extensively and proposed the location of the length of the 269 kilometer run it purportedly made from Apiak in a line north and eventually looping around to Awal.[190] However, once again, we are faced with a complete absence of evidence for traces of a defensive wall along this route, leading to the possible conclusion that such a defensive line was simply constituted by a series of fortified sites and towns along this or another line. This and the earlier fortification system, whatever their form, aside from requiring significant construction efforts, were protracted endeavors that spanned more than the years during which building activity is mentioned.[191]

In addition to the construction of a wall, material efforts against the Amorites also involved military campaigns, most of which are, however, unattested among the official records from which Ur III history is written, in particular, year names and letters. What is available are lists of tribute collected from Amorites during years for which no wars are otherwise mentioned.[192] Such tribute lists may be suggestive of unattested campaigns into Amorite territories in northern Mesopotamia and potentially into the northern stretches of the Levant. As such, these campaigns no doubt also had unintended consequences both for the Ur III state and northern Mesopotamia's inhabitants, first and foremost for the shaping of martial attitudes and a martial culture of sorts among some Amorites.

Hostile actions by Tidnumite elements, wars against them, and the efforts made to counter their incursions may make it easier to reconcile aspersions concerning Amorites that first appear in the Ur III. These reflect what must have been contemporaneous tensions between the acceptance of the presence of Amorites already living in the south and the activities of Tidnumites. The lack of recognition of this relatively simple point has led to inabilities to

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[188] *RIME* 3/2.1.4.1, lns. 34ff., p. 298.
[189] Richard Barnett (1963: 20ff.) attempted to identify this wall; it was subsequently refuted by Julian Reade (1964). For references regarding the relative length of these walls, see Barnett 1963: 21 and Wilcke 1969. For detailed discussion, see Michalowski 2011: 143–69.
[190] Michalowski 2011: 153–58.
[191] Ibid.: 167–68.
[192] Garfinkle 2014: 354–55; also Hebenstreit 2014.

negotiate seemingly contradictory circumstances, namely the ascendance of Amorites within the Ur III state while seeing Amorites reviled in literature and, evidently, within royal correspondence. The mar-tu were characterized by the state during Shu-Sin's reign, for example, as "a ravaging people, with the instincts of a beast, like wolves . . . who do not know grain."[193] Although the characterizations employ tropes, they are unequivocally negative.

Although similar aspersions continued to be preserved in text copies of *The Curse of Akkad, Enki and the World Order*, and *Lugalbanda II*, these are a part of the Sumerian curricula of the OB Period.[194] Therefore, they should be regarded as the result of a decentralized approach to scribal training that was not concerned as much with the traditions as it was with the development of the craft. It is not always clear, therefore, how to reconcile these views with the presumably Semitic-speaking scribes who preserved them. Nonetheless, the evolving perspective of Amorites within these traditions reveal a cultural updating as scribes interacted with them, in some cases perhaps even under Amorite patronage.[195] Even so, it would be a strange phenomenon for Amorite patronage to have propagated if such tropes had not existed earlier. Caution should be exercised, therefore, in dismissing negative characterizations of Amorites in Sumerian literature. Given the challenging social and economic circumstances during the Ur III, the existence of such views does not seem surprising.

Amorites and the Fall of Ur

Despite some uncertainty about the historical conclusions that can be drawn from the royal correspondence of Ibbi-Sin (2026–2004? BC), there remains a general consensus that sources ascribed to his reign, and in particular the correspondence with his general Ishbi-Erra, more or less reflect circumstances in the closing days of the Ur III Dynasty.[196] The picture is not one of a sudden and necessarily violent collapse,[197] as might be inferred from the laments themselves, but rather a picture of a breakdown in the centrality of rule as Ur was beset by military challenges from its neighbors, among its territorial possessions, and along its borders. The correspondence also reveals southern Mesopotamian efforts to break away from Ur control, along with largely unchecked migration into the region, and a degree of food insecurity

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[193] *RIME* 3/2.1.4.1, p. 299.
[194] See Cooper 1983: 31–33.
[195] Porter 2012: 252–95.
[196] Michalowski 2011: 186–92.
[197] For literature on collapse in Mesopotamia, see essays in Yoffee and Cowgil 1988, as well as Weiss and Courty 1993 and Weiss 2000. For essays dealing with post-collapse regeneration of societies, see Schwartz and Nichols (2006).

associated with challenges to procuring grain. Thus, something of a perfect storm swarmed around the short-lived dynasty of Ur, some of which was clearly of its own making, a hubris of sorts for an over-extended state.

It seems that relatively early in the reign of the last king of the Ur III Dynasty, Ibbi-Sin (2026–2004? BC), Ishbi-Erra of Isin had written to the king concerning the threat posed by restless Amorite tribes:

> You gave me orders concerning an expedition from Isin to Kazallu to purchase grain. As the market price of grain was equivalent to (one shekel) per kor, twenty talents of silver was invested in the purchase of grain. Word having reached me that hostile Amorites had entered your frontier territory, I proceeded to deliver all the grain – 72,000 kor – into (the city of) Isin. But now all the Amorites have entered the homeland, and have captured all the great storehouses, one by one. Because of (these) Amorites I cannot hand over the grain for threshing; they are too strong for me, and I am made to stay put. Therefore, my king should (order) the caulking of 600 barges of 120 kor capacity, *escorted by 12 armed ships*, and load each with 20 *swords*, 30 *bows*, load each ship with 30 *beams* and five (additional) hatches, and have all the boats . . . so that they can be brought down by water, through the Idkura and the Palistum canals so they can pile up (the grain) in stacks (for drying), and I will myself go out to meet him (i.e., Ibbi-Sin). I shall take responsibility for the place where the boat(s) moor, so that the 72,000 kor of grain – that is all of the grain – will be placed (there), and be safe. . . . Should there be a shortage of grain, I will be the one who brings you grain. My king is troubled by the war with the Elamite, but his own grain rations are rapidly being depleted, so do not release your grip on power, do not rush to become his servant, and to follow him! There is (enough) grain in my city to provision your palace and all the people for fifteen years, so let the responsibility of guarding the cities of Isin and Nippur be mine! Now my king is informed (about all of this)![198]

With such texts it is not difficult to understand how historians had elided references to the mar-tu such as this with literary works such as *The Lament for the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* to yield a cause-and-effect scenario that implicated Amorites as key players in Ur's decline. However, as outlined in the previous chapter, the presence of Amorites was not new to southern Mesopotamia. As witnessed again during the reigns of Ibbi-Sin and his predecessors, Amorites were already integrated at various levels of the Ur III sociopolitical hierarchy. The figure of Ishbi-Erra is particularly illustrative of this process.

Ishbi-Erra appears to have been originally from Mari, as he is identified by Ibbi-Sin as "the man of Mari."[199] Although he is never explicitly identified as

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[198] *CKU* 21, Michalowski 2011: 417–18.
[199] *CKU* 24; ibid.: 464.

Amorite, it is quite often assumed that he was Amorite because he was from Mari and, furthermore, because his name can be read as Amorite rather than as Akkadian.[200] Due to his stature in Isin, his rise, and involvement in military affairs it is also assumed that he held a high military position. While there can be disagreement concerning Ishbi-Erra's military rank within the Ur III state apparatus (despite his military role) and his identification as an Amorite, even if he hailed from Mari,[201] it is worth noting that a narrow characterization of Ishbi-Erra as Amorite or not is based upon traditional interpretations of the linguistic affiliations of names and the presence or absence of qualifiers like mar-tu, which return us to rigid definitions of Amorite identity.

How Ur III Mari ultimately came to be identified as largely Amorite during the OB Period involved complex social exchanges, which at their roots involved individuals like Ishbi-Erra, negotiating their relationships to changing circumstances and evolving factions within the Ur state and in the immediate aftermath of its decline. The rulers of Mari were integrated into the Ur III state early on through intermarriage, when the daughter of the ruler of Mari, Apil-Kin, married Ur-Nammu's son. That such relations were of paramount importance is demonstrated by the incorporation of the king of Mari in the ancestor cult of the Ur III Dynasty.[202] We are not certain what identity to assign to Mari's inhabitants during the Ur III rule of the Shakkanakkus, particularly since, like cities in southern Mesopotamia, it is likely that Mari included a number of constituencies. Ibbi-Sin declares in one letter that Ishbi-Erra, "the man from Mari," was "not even of Sumerian seed," and implied that his behavior effectively constituted treason.[203] We can conclude, however, that Ishbi-Erra, as a non-native Sumerian, hailed from a Semitic population, likely Amorite. In light of his non-foreign status with respect to the Ur III state, which did not warrant the use of the mar-tu (or any other) label as a foreign agent, there is no evident reason why he could not also be identified as a member of one of Mari's Amorite communities.

If he was not identified as a foreigner by the state, Ishbi-Erra was clearly an outsider who played a pivotal role in the transition away from Ur's rule during the early second millennium. As such, Ishbi-Erra may resist being labeled more than any individual encountered during the late third or early second millennium, and yet he is an archetypal figure for his negotiation of the circumstances surrounding the fall of Ur. That all of the elements of Ibbi-Sin's characterization of Ishbi-Erra were not viewed as negative is revealed in several divine hymns for Ishbi-Erra from the First Dynasty of Isin. These appropriate and

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[200] For qualification of his name as Amorite, see Michalowski 1995a: 185.
[201] Michalowski 2011: 118–19.
[202] Michalowski 2005: 205, and literature cited there.
[203] CKU 24; Michalowski 2011: 464.

glorify the very identity that is ascribed to Ishbi-Erra among copies of Shu-Sin's correspondence. In these Isbhi-Erra is portrayed not only as brought "down from the mountains" but chosen by An and Enlil "from Mari to be the king of the land." Of course, by not repeating them, these hymns obviously reject Ibbi-Sin's overt slurs that he was a "monkey from the mountains" or that he had "the mind of a dog." As Michalowski notes, by invoking language used by Ur-Nammu, the hymns seek to legitimize Ishbi-Erra's rule.[204]

As the career of Ishbi-Erra reveals, civil service constituted an important vector for the political elevation of foreigners such as Amorites. Another such figure is found in Naplanum of Larsa, who is mentioned in more than ninety texts.[205] Although there is some possibility that all instances of this name in texts do not refer to the same individual,[206] their distribution in time and space suggest that an individual by the name Naplanum played an important role as a chief of an Amorite mercenary unit in the Ur III state. The sheer volume of references to him also indicate that he lived long enough to outlast the demise of Ur's dynasty and emerge as the first ruler of Larsa, rising to power under unknown circumstances. He was evidently a resident of a little-known town of Kisig near Larsa, which may explain his later social and political ties to Larsa. Occurrences of his name also permit the identification of several of his relatives, including his wife and sons, all of whom resided in Sumer. In lists, he was frequently identified alongside individuals from Mari, Urshu, and Ebla (i.e., western lands).[207] He also had ties to a vague location known as the "land of Martu," which Steinkeller suggests was his original residence and Michalowski suggests was likely located across the Tigris to the north, though he also notes that Amorite lands were located east, northeast, and even northwest of Sumer.[208] While he served the Ur III regime, Naplanum's status was clearly as a person of interest whose economic activities and social entanglements were carefully tracked. Furthermore, despite his emergence as king of Larsa after the fall of Ur, there is no evidence to infer that he engaged in treachery to accomplish this. It seems, therefore very likely that his ascendance was merely a byproduct of Ur's collapse, which left him among the highest-ranking members of the failed state around Larsa, and one who was able to effect order and continuity immediately after its collapse.

While the fall of Ur is described in later sources as having occurred at the hands of a great "flood," which is often imagined as swarms of invading

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[204] Michalowski 2005: 203–04.
[205] For a recent biography of Naplanum, see Steinkeller 2004: 37–40.
[206] Buccellati 1966: 319.
[207] Fitzgerald 2002: 23.
[208] Steinkeller 2004: 39; Michalowski 2011: 103–5.

Gutians, Elamites, and Amorites,[209] its closing days were actually a protracted and gradual affair that likely culminated in the Elamite sack of Ur itself. Indeed, it is interesting, if not ironic, that the name for Ibbi-Sin's seventeenth year (2010 BC) was "The year the Amorites [mar-tu] of (the) southern border, who from ancient times have known no cities, submitted to Ibbi-Sin, king of Ur."[210] Here perhaps the landlessness and homelessness of some Amorite groups is highlighted, if as a gross generalization. Yet it is possible that this trope's power was its wider recognition of the historical displacements that were endemic to many Amorites, which by Ibbi-Sin's reign were almost two centuries old. Although the Amorites played a role, Gutians and Elamites, to say nothing of regional leaders within Ur III administration, whose loyalties to Ur had evaporated, all played their own roles in Ur's collapse.[211] Furthermore, the temporal limits of Ur's domination, particularly as viewed in the wake of Lagash under Gudea, provide grounds for suggesting that the period was simply one in a series of dynastic experiments in restoring centralized rule, from the reign of Gudea until that of Hammurapi, all of which fundamentally sought to reestablish the extent of Akkadian imperial rule.

The foregoing reappraisal of the Gutian and Ur III periods permits an alternative, though complimentary, perspective concerning the relationship of political and socioeconomic developments to Amorites. Within this characterization, the Second Dynasty of Lagash and the Third Dynasty of Ur sought, first and foremost, to reestablish an Akkadian-like imperial domination over Mesopotamia and neighboring regions. While Ur III expansion outlasted other attempts, it is easy to overstate its accomplishments. Closer examination of its inner workings reveals a state that, somewhat unsurprisingly, was highly dependent on powerful families within different communities. It also reveals a short-lived, exceedingly exploitive state that, contrary to many assumptions, shows no hallmarks of resilience or sustainability. For this reason, its history primarily revolves around only three rulers: a founder, a consolidator, and the king who presided over its fall. Despite the plethora of Ur III documentation, we cannot make conclusive statements about the full scope of Amorite infiltration of the south during the Ur III.[212] What is clear, however, is that Amorites were present as war captives, slaves, high-ranking military personnel, and civil servants, and in a range of economic capacities that illustrate the avenues by which Amorites were increasingly identified as bonafide members of Babylonian society.

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[209] Frayne 1997: 365.
[210] *RIME* 3/2.1.5, p. 364.
[211] Michalowski 2011: 170–216.
[212] Ibid.: 111.

THE STATE AND AMORITE SERVICE

Having reviewed the migration and resettlement of Amorites in southern Mesopotamia and the historical circumstances that shaped their relationships to various Babylonian states after Akkad, we can consider specific examples of Amorite service within the fiercely ambitious and well-organized Ur III state. These examples expose social vectors by which individuals, clans, and tribes could demonstrate their loyalty to the state and also increase their socio-economic and political standing in Babylonia during the late third millennium. By contrasting the foregoing characterizations of Amorites with the various roles that Amorites are known to have occupied within Ur III society, it is possible to reconcile the seemingly divergent views of Amorites that are offered by our sources. As civil service has already been addressed in the discussion of the careers of Ishbi-Erra and Naplanum as an important form of political advancement, in this section participation in the state labor pool and in a variety of specialized trades are explored.

In addition to major building projects, military expansion and an increasing reliance on professional soldiers or mercenaries – who are often explicitly identified as Amorites – created specific social contexts for their integration. During the Ur III, the appearance of Amorites in connection with mercenary service, for example, seems ironic since Amorite groups were in active service to the state but were also mentioned among its security concerns. This was possible, however, because Amorites dwelling in the south during the Ur III represented different stages in the integration of Amorites with, as textual sources intimate, some earlier communities, while later arrivals likely included different vintages of immigrants, representing the circumstances and conditions under which they arrived. This then may account for the varying relationships between Amorite groups and the Ur III state that are attested at one and the same time in southern Mesopotamia. The oldest communities of Amorites pre-dated Akkadian rule, with others immigrating during the two centuries following the fall of Akkad. By the time of the Ur III Dynasty, the earliest vintages were likely full members of urban Mesopotamian society, were probably not qualified as foreigners, and thus not marked as such in texts despite that in many cases they bore linguistically Amorite names. This was the case even as efforts were made to limit additional Amorite immigration.

General comparisons to modern circumstances regarding immigration provide apt analogies to the complexities of identity and immigration. Opinions on immigration policies can change not only among a populace as a whole, even in relatively short periods, as well as change among integrated members of a community, who may choose to oppose further immigration from a group with which they might identify because of a perceived threat to their community's prospects. Nevertheless, in the late third millennium and early second

millennium, there is no clear evidence to suggest that Amorites themselves ever adopted anti-Amorite immigration stances. The perspective preserved during the Ur III is – for better or worse – exclusively that of the crown and its administration.

Despite the fact that our records are overwhelmingly skewed by primarily representing the state's perspective, they expose pathways to various forms of incorporation and integration into Sumerian society. Among them were royal prerogatives to politically integrate non-Sumerian elements, whether through marriage or official appointments. This paralleled a rise of a class of mobile elites that included merchants.[213] The paths to integration all reveal royal initiatives, namely in the manner in which the royal household played a role in elevating individuals through official positions.[214] As such these positions are instructive in illustrating the manner by which Amorites, among others, rose to prominent positions of civil and military service under the Third Dynasty of Ur and were therefore positioned to play a major role in the balkanization of the state after its fall. None of this, however, can be surprising in light of the incredible demographic growth experienced in southern Mesopotamia during the late third millennium, which attests, as noted earlier, to a steady influx of outsiders among whom Amorites were but one constituency. Therefore, running in parallel to movements by Amorite groups against the northern and western boundaries of the Ur III state and the introduction of prisoners of war were processes that introduced still other Amorites into capacities of service to the state. These forms of service were the product of the employment of surplus labor in monument construction, civil service, and mercenary service.

Labor for the State

A number of the undertakings for which the Ur III state is known can be reconsidered in light of the potential presence of surplus human labor, even if we are not always certain how labor was obtained and organized.[215] On the basis of a settlement density of 125 persons per hectare, Robert Adams has estimated that the population of southern Mesopotamia during the Ur III was approximately half a million.[216] If Amorites were around ten percent of this population, and only 100 persons per hectare are assumed as estimates for the OB Period suggest (see Chapter 5), then the region's Amorite population was

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[213] Garfinkle 2012.
[214] Garfinkle 2013: 156–57.
[215] Kuhrt 1995: 62.
[216] Adams 1981: 149.

at least 40,000 at an adjusted estimate of 100 persons per hectare, spread among dozens of settlements.

The quantity of surplus labor manifest in refugee populations means that they are often the targets of exploitation, and such circumstances may have also existed during the Ur III. This may explain the capacity of the Ur III state, if not also during the rule of Gudea of Lagash, for significant state-sponsored building initiatives. The state, beset by what appears to have been a protracted influx of migrants amidst the usual obligations it faced, was compelled to pursue all means necessary to improve crop yields to meet the demands of its growing population.[217] This included employing exacting standards of accounting for labor obligations. Its burgeoning population presented it with increasingly larger pools of potential conscripts and replacements for corvée labor by the region's inhabitants.[218] This labor was employed in the "excavation of new canals and works on existing irrigation and water-transportations systems; the building of roads and related infrastructure, such as the networks of roadhouses and relay station; and certain types of agricultural activity" such as "harvest work," but also "military service *sensu stricto*" such as "participation in either defensive or offensive operations."[219]

Such employment opportunities were also the nearest equivalent to the extension of financial assistance that refugees and the destitute could expect in antiquity while, of course, resulting in substantial advantages for the state and its elites. Fortification building projects, like those mentioned previously, could be intended for the protection of new refugee communities,[220] but they did share the universal characteristic of being of unequivocal value to the state, both in defending it and projecting a sense of its legitimacy through monument construction. No shortage of examples of such projects are available during the Ur III, including the construction of walls like the Wall of the Land and "Muriq-Tidnim," fortresses, ziqqurats, and roads.[221] The period itself is conspicuous for its monuments, and all the more so given the short phase during which these were built, principally a sixty-year period in the reigns of Ur-Nammu and Shulgi. The participation by large sections of Ur III society in these projects, however, also had the effect of engendering social integration, and perhaps emphasizing a "communal and egalitarian spirit,"[222] although our conclusions should not be overly rosy in this respect.

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[217] Powell 1985: 36.
[218] Lafont 2009.
[219] Steinkeller 2015a: 137–38.
[220] As, for example, in the construction of Jerusalem's eighth-century BC fortifications, built around the refugee community there (Burke 2012: 280–82).
[221] Kuhrt 1995: 60–70.
[222] Steinkeller 2013: 348–49.

Specialization

During the Ur III, Amorites are attested in a range of roles across the social and economic spectrum in texts from Lagash, Puzrish-Dagan (Drehem), and Umma. Among these are various types of craft specialization, including messengers of the king, bodyguards, soldiers, transporters, mourners, brewers, priests, farmers, fowlers, fullers, weavers, janitors, and many in various forms of administrative service, including royal envoys and messengers and mayors.[223] Conspicuous among these roles are those associated with what can be broadly qualified as military service.

The military activities and engagements of the Ur III state and the Akkadian Empire created an environment over the course of nearly three centuries during which groups like the Amorites were repeatedly targeted. Although it was short-lived, the Ur III was one of near constant warfare,[224] building upon an Akkadian legacy of two centuries of intervention in territories inhabited by Gutians, Amorites, and Elamites. This military activity had the obvious effect of contributing a steady stream of Amorite prisoners of war to southern Mesopotamia.[225] Some Amorite slaves, presumably war captives, are even attested having attempted to escape back to Amorite territories on multiple occasions.[226] However, an unintended result of military intervention was the protracted exposure of groups like the Amorites to the art of state warfare and military resistance to it.

Battle-hardened Amorite warriors were a significant product of constant military interventions by Akkad and Ur, as the evidence for professional military service by Amorites during the Ur III would seem to suggest. The hardening of Ur's northern frontier only further contributed to the consolidation of resistance by tribal elements.[227] The general "transformation of indigenous patterns of warfare brought about by the proximity or intrusion of expanding states" in other contexts has been aptly described as a byproduct of "war in the tribal zone."[228] By the Ur III, Amorites were officially conscripted throughout different levels of the Ur III political and military apparatus. Amorites served in the royal body guard, as contingents in the army, and as the state guards of Ur.[229] In most cases, these individuals were marked as mar-tu, clarifying their official identity as foreigners, while most other Amorites are identified as such solely by virtue of the linguistics of their names.

[223] Buccellati 1966: 340–42.
[224] Garfinkle 2014.
[225] Gelb 1972: 79.
[226] Limet 1995: 175.
[227] Michalowski 2011: 168.
[228] See Ferguson and Whitehead 1992.
[229] Lafont 2009: 16n84; also Michalowski 2006: 53 and 59.

As perhaps one of the oldest male professions, military service was one of the surest means of demonstrating social and political allegiance. Steven Garfinkle observes that "warfare offered social pathways that bound individuals more closely to the state."[230] It is unsurprising then that Amorites should find themselves in positions within the military apparatus of the Ur III state, as did other foreign groups, such as the Elamites.[231]

During the Ur III, mar-tu came to denote "elite Amorite guards."[232] That the highest rank in the military chain of command during the OB Period was that of the gal mar-tu or ugula mar-tu ("general," lit. "overseer of the Amorites"),[233] both rendered in Sumerian, is suggestive of the origin of these ranks during the Ur III. These individuals were evidently full participants in Ur III society. Their donations of sheep at Puzrish-Dagan, for example, do not reflect their identification as pastoralists,[234] but are rather a material reminder of the role of the king as shepherd and their loyalty to the crown.[235] Furthermore, it is noteworthy that such individuals with military positions can be identified as Amorites with the greatest certainty because they were regularly marked as mar-tu in texts *and* possessed linguistically Amorite names.[236] Some of these individuals were associated with fortresses, specifically towns with the name bàd^ki (Sum. "fortress"),[237] which provides yet another association between foreign Amorite elements and their mercenary service. The fairly consistent qualification of these individuals as mar-tu is entirely to be expected, if as noted earlier, the designation was reserved for individuals whose activities were to be carefully tracked by the state. The concern seems to have been to make sure that their activities did not conflict with their primary role, namely ensuring the rule of Ur III regents.

In addition to serving as an elite guard, Amorite commanders are also known to have been placed in charge of special units, such as archers, during the Ur III. In one notable case an Amorite by the name of Ahbabu commanded at least 1,200 archers and was provisioned with a spear with silver-plated shaft in recognition of his status,[238] indicating how ceremonial weapons could function in honoring military service in the late third millennium. The prevalence of daggers in tombs of the late third millennium in the Levant as well as commemorative fenestrated axes,[239] for example, echo the importance

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[230] Garfinkle 2013: 160.
[231] Michalowski 2008: 111.
[232] Michalowski 2011: 110.
[233] Stol 2004: 805–11.
[234] Contra Porter 2012: 298–300.
[235] Garfinkle, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold."
[236] Buccellati 1966: 340–42; Michalowski 2011: 107–9.
[237] Owen 1995.
[238] Vidal 2011: 249.
[239] Silver 2014: 244–58.

of status as signaled through outward symbols of such service. These elements were traditionally associated with males, usually in isolated burials frequently labeled "warrior" burials.[240] Military service thereby appears to have constituted a significant means by which Amorites and others were integrated into the military and political organization of the Ur III Dynasty and among other contemporaneous societies.

AMORITES AND THE WEST

Having established the end of the third millennium in Mesopotamia as a period of intensive relocation for many Amorite communities, the influence of these Amorites among neighboring regions in Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt can be carefully explored. Although documentary sources are more spartan in the last centuries of the third millennium BC in the west, various lines of evidence provide insights into this period of transition toward the Amorite states that are attested in the early second millennium from Mari to southern Canaan. As the settlement data was reviewed at the outset of this chapter, we can turn our attention to the negotiations of community identity among a number of sites that serve as critical benchmarks in this process.

Mari, between East and West

Individuals from northern parts of Mesopotamia and the Levant were no strangers to southern Mesopotamia by the late third millennium, though various individuals and groups were occasionally identified as foreigners in texts. Although sources are few, specifically for the Gutian Period, emissaries from states west of Mari which are accounted for among Ur III sources included Ebla, Byblos, Yamʾadium (Yaḫmadu?), Mukish (Alalakh), Tuttul, and Urshu.[241] A series of Ur III diplomatic marriages with the locations in northern Mesopotamia are also attested.[242] On the northern side of the Jazira, the Hurrian state of Urkesh centered at Tell Mozan also maintained contacts with the Ur III state.[243] However, in difference to the Akkadian Empire, no Ur III campaigns are known to have been directed into northwestern Mesopotamia or the northern Levant,[244] nor are commercial ventures mentioned, though they might be inferred from the presence of emissaries from these regions.

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[240] Philip 1995.
[241] Owens 1990.
[242] Sallaberger 2007: 433–44.
[243] Sallaberger 2011: 331.
[244] Owens 1990: 113n23.

Given that the main routes for trade and diplomatic envoys from these regions conducted them along the Euphrates Valley, the role of Mari during the late third millennium was particularly significant in mediating cultural transactions between groups from northern Mesopotamia and the Levant as well as Babylonia and the Persian Gulf. In light of the limited evidence for interactions between southern and northern Mesopotamia during the Gutian and Ur III periods, it can be argued that most of what we know of territories west of Mari is predominantly the result of Mari's role as intermediary between the west and post-Akkadian states in the south. Mari functioned as a middle ground as a result of its position along the primary route connecting the west and southern Mesopotamia. This status was bolstered by a general decline of territories to its north during the last two centuries of the third millennium, which relegated routes through the region to a less significant status. Despite the challenge of labeling Mari's inhabitants during this period, an examination of its material culture also suggests that it played a mediating role in the negotiation of Amorite identity in Mesopotamia during the late third millennium following the displacement of communities of Amorites after 2200 BC.

At the start of the Ur III (2112 BC), a century after emigration from the zone of uncertainty, Mari's considerable growth indicates that it too had experienced an influx of outsiders.[245] Growth such as this during a relatively short period of time seems only reasonably explained in antiquity by reference to immigration. It is also noteworthy that a number of construction projects, including the restoration of Mari's temples and the construction of its massive fortifications, took place during this period under the aegis of its Shakkanakku rulers, contemporary with large-scale building efforts in the south.[246] While the cultural identity of the Shakkanakku are ambiguous, the first of whom was probably installed by Naram-Sin, their role was not unlike that of Gudea in ultimately fostering an accommodating social environment for the city's diverse constituents. There is no evidence of any of the problems referenced in the south associated with Amorites in Mari's region, although the transition between Shakkanakku rule and Amorite rule after 1900 BC is obscure both historically and archaeologically. References to individuals during the Ur III, such as the "men of Mari" and Ishbi-Erra, suggest that Amorites likely composed an important constituency within the city. There is no evidence, however, that they were regarded as foreigners, and given Mari's location, Amorites had undoubtedly been a familiar presence already for centuries.

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[245] Butterlin 2007: 242; Margueron 2004: 336.
[246] Butterlin 2007: 240–43. For rulers and dates, see Margueron 2014: 60, 113; Margueron 2004: 328.

Despite Mari's rapid growth, its rebuilding appears to have been a gradual process.[247] The archaeological remains of this rebuilding, which are identified with City III, reveal a gradual yet conspicuous appearance of a number of elements of an early second-millennium koine. Distinguishing between elements of the Shakkanakku Period (2200–1850 BC) and the later OB cities is complicated by a lack of evidence for a destruction of the Shakkanakku city, which therefore allowed for considerable continuity between the plans of each town. Its plan and refortification appear to have been undertaken shortly after its destruction by Akkadian forces.[248] The palace appears to have been rebuilt by Shu-Dagan (2178–2173 BC) and was later rebuilt, possibly as late as the reign of Hanun-Dagan (2000–1992 BC), and it was this structure that functioned as the Great Royal Palace of Zimri-Lim until it was destroyed by Hammurapi of Babylon.[249]

Religious architecture, particularly temple building, serves as one of the conspicuous elements of Mari's material culture during the Shakkanakku Period and one that reveals the negotiations of identities within the city during the late third millennium.[250] Indeed, the temples of the mid-third-millennium city reveal plans in keeping with southern Mesopotamian traditions during the same period, but they do feature one early example of a direct-axis temple of the type attested in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant before the Shakkanakku Period (see Figure 2.4).[251] However, later during the Shakkanakku Period several temples exhibit plans that adhere to the plan of the direct-axis temple type. The adaptation of the plan to earlier temples suggests the deliberate appropriation of this western architectural type, as in the case of the temple of Ninhursag, which had been present since the mid-third millennium but was probably modified by Nûr-Mer (2128–2123 BC).[252] However, adaptation and modification of new temples were also possible, as in the case of the so-called Temple of the Lions that may have been dedicated to Adad, possibly built by Ishtup-Ilum (2123–2112 BC). It not only featured two cellas at the rear of a direct-axis temple but also incorporated a terrace against the building's outer wall, the function of which remains unclear (see Figure 2.4).[253] The chapel constructed for Isthar in the Palace (Room 132) also now conformed to the direct-axis plan.[254] The Temple of Shamash, which is also attributed to

[247] Margueron 2014: 61.
[248] Ibid.: 41–42, 59–65.
[249] Ibid.: 114–19.
[250] Ibid.: 93–96.
[251] Ibid., 87, also fig. 79, p. 83.
[252] Ibid.: 95–96, figs. 79g and 96.
[253] Ibid.: 94–95, figs. 93 and 95.
[254] Ibid.: 96, fig. 114.

Ishtup-Ilum, however, retained the earlier temple plan, in seeming indifference to the new style of temple architecture. The Shakkanakku Period at
Mari presents itself, therefore, as a period of substantial transition in monumental temple architecture, as religious traditions undoubtedly adapted to
Mari's changing communities.
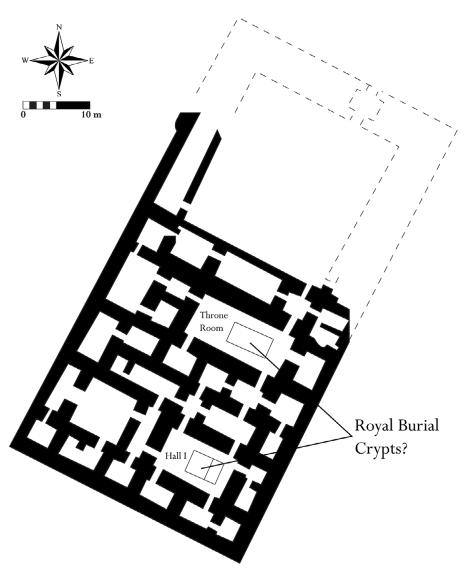
Burial customs during the Shakkanakku Period at Mari also reveal its
transition toward a tradition that would become common during the MBA,
belonging to the residential funerary chamber type. Among these are subterranean burials in the floors of houses, including jar burials (95 examples),
simple inhumations (70), sarcophagi (28), and built chambers (7).[255] Out of
200 burials attested, nearly half were jar burials and these along with simple
inhumations accounted for 85 percent of burials. Jar burials, terracotta sarcophagi, and built chambers are innovations during this period, and the tombs with
the highest value and quantity of finds are those with built structures.[256] The
introduction of these new burial customs is suggestive of a change in practices
from the earlier period, which was dominated by simple pit inhumations.
Consequently, the evidence for burials at Mari during the Shakkanakku
Period reveals a diverse community representing a transition in burial practices
that accompanied social change at Mari.

While no royal burial crypt has been identified in the Great Royal Palace at
Mari, the Little Eastern Palace of City III housed two such complexes, one
under Hall I and the other under the Throne Room (Figure 3.6). The
hypogeum below Hall I was 2.65 by 2.50 m and built from fired bricks with
a corbelled roof up to 2.40 m. The date of construction and the complex's use
are uncertain, although a few vessels were recovered and dated to the last
century of the third millennium by the excavators. The much larger hypogeum below the Throne Room was, unfortunately, in worse condition, but
measured 6.80 × 3.78 m and was likewise constructed of fired bricks. The
excavators concluded that the hypogea were added in the earliest stage of the
construction of the Little Eastern Palace and were likely served by the *kispum*
funerary rites. While the palace was a functioning building, hosting members
of the royal family, it is thought to have been constructed during the
Shakkanakku Dynasty when there was a need for a building that could host
the royal burials.[257] As observed earlier, these new burial practices reveal a
desire to maintain associations between the residences of kin groups and their
deceased ancestors, as an element in the construction and maintenance of
identity.

[255] Ibid.: 127–30.
[256] Nassar 2016: 273.
[257] Margueron 2014: 122–26.

3.6 Location of burial complex in the Little Eastern Palace of City III at Mari.
Source: Margueron 2004: 351, fig. 330. Illustration by Amy Karoll

A similar hypogeum has been identified with the construction of Room Q in Palace A at Tell Bi'a (Tuttul) dated to the end of the third millennium, with parallels drawn to the contemporaneous Mari tombs discussed previously.[258] The earliest such royal residential funerary chamber in northern Mesopotamia, however, may be the hypogeum from Tell Ahmar (Til Barsip),[259] which apparently was located below a building complex.[260] It seems

[258] Miglus and Strommenger 2007: 58–63, pls. 6, 77.
[259] Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936.
[260] Roobaert and Bunnens 1999.

therefore reasonable to suggest that the second-millennium ideal type for royal burial complexes developed from traditions that took shape during the late third millennium and are represented at Mari and sites to its west.

Amorite Influence from Mari South

Alongside an abundance of documentation for the presence of Amorites and their influence on settlement patterns from Mari south, it is reasonable to wonder what the nature of Amorite influence was on specific cultural traditions in southern Mesopotamia. While it is impossible to be certain of the exact nature of the exchange of such traditions that would result in their adoption, it may be argued more broadly that encounters with Amorites from the mid-third millennium through the Ur III served as the basis for the introduction of a number of innovations to southern Mesopotamia. Although many of these traditions are less conspicuous until the early second millennium, by the late third millennium two such innovations already appear to include commemorative stelae and a new type of temple architecture.

As discussed earlier, stelae were known by a variety of terms in different linguistic traditions: *naduašê* in Sumerian, and later as *sikkanu* and *narû* in Akkadian. While their Amorite name is unknown, monumental stelae of an uninscribed, aniconic tradition are particularly prolific in the third-millennium landscape of the Levant. There they have been identified by scholars with the terms *betyl* (Greek), *menhir* (Ar.), and *massebah* (Hebrew).[261] Their prolific numbers in the west are almost certainly a byproduct of the availability of stone for the erection of such monuments, a marked contrast with conditions in southern Mesopotamia. Indeed, it is the conspicuous absence of stone for construction in southern Mesopotamia that so distinctly identifies the origins of this tradition as exogenous. Although such an observation may seem almost banal, the sheer number of these monuments in the Levant and the labor-intensive requirements of shipping stone to the south suggest that the idea was very much a foreign one. By whatever term they are identified, these stelae served as commemorative markers. From the Stele of the Vultures dated to the mid-third millennium through the monuments of the kings of Akkad, Gudea, and Ur, this tradition was clearly one that found favor and would be continued during the early second millennium if principally because of its conspicuousness, despite the relatively small size of these monuments.

During the Ur III the introduction of changes in temple architecture may have been another of the significant elements of the influence of Amorite as well as other northern groups. The influence can be suggested as one of the

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[261] Graesser 1972.

cultural influences of new arrivals to southern Mesopotamia beginning as early as 2200 BC. Although the number of known examples to date remains limited, temples in Ur, Eshnunna, and Mari reveal these influences, namely in the adoption of the direct-axis (*in antis*) temple plan. At Mari, for example, temples of the *in antis* type were in use before the Shakkanakku Period and as such continued to function through the Ur III (see Figure 2.4 and discussion in Chapter 2). The most significant example of such a temple during the Ur III can be identified within the Giparu at Ur. Although little can be said regarding the activity with the Giparu during the Ur III, it continued to function during the OB Period (see Chapter 5 and Figure 5.9).[262] The Temple of Shu-Sin, which was built at Eshnunna by one of its local rulers while Shu-Sin was still king of Ur, also conforms to the direct-axis *in antis* plan (see Figure 5.2). Another temple built to its west and appended to the western end of the palace also shares in this plan.[263]

While the precise vector by which this temple type enters the southern Mesopotamian temple repertoire may be unclear at present, it seems unlikely that exposure to the impressive architectural remains of third millennium temples in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant by a restricted number of Akkadians and Sumerians from the south can explain the transmission of this architectural form. Indeed, its appearance is thus far documented only *after* the demographic changes that beset Mesopotamia. Given the abandonment and decline after 2200 BC of so many of the settlements at which this temple architecture had been prevalent, the incorporation of this tradition in the south finds its likeliest introduction by members of northern communities who had relocated to the south where it served their enclaves. Whatever the means by which we might reconstruct the introduction of this temple type, the appearance of examples of the direct-axis type in southern Mesopotamia in the late third millennium exposes the influence of northern communities, where such temples had been conspicuous monuments among these settlements during earlier centuries.

Despite changes that temple architecture underwent at the end of the third millennium due to western influences, changes to ritual were evidently more gradual. There is little to suggest the abandonment of traditional aspects of Mesopotamian cult, and there was, for instance, no supplanting of the traditional Mesopotamian pantheon, for whom most of the new direct-axis temples were built from the Ur III to the OB periods. Therefore, the few

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[262] Woolley 1974: 43–44.
[263] Early attempts by Frankfort (1970: 107–9) to explain this architecture as an evolution of earlier traditions were flawed. These efforts expose the assumption that the evolution of Mesopotamian culture occurred in relative isolation, overlooking how outside influences may have shaped local traditions.

examples of this temple that can be confidently dated to the Ur III are, as with many elements concerning foreign influences, suggestive of a protracted and gradual process of cultural influence that accompanied the integration of Amorites and other western foreigners.

The Levant in Transition

The evidence for the relocation and resettlement of inhabitants from settlements in the zone of uncertainty in the northern Levant has already been addressed. In light of this diaspora, as was the case in southern Mesopotamia, it is also necessary to consider how such groups interacted with host communities in the Levant. After the destruction of Ebla, historical sources for the final centuries of the third millennium in the Levant are, unfortunately, entirely lacking. We must rely therefore entirely on archaeological reconstructions to supplement this picture and, yet, in the northern Levant, archaeological data provide a restricted picture of social and cultural developments during this period. The situation in the southern Levant, while based on a broader collection of archaeologically investigated sites, is hampered, however, by its overwhelmingly diminished population and rural character after the mid-third millennium and limited evidence for connections with other regions (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, this period in the Levant is of critical importance to the transition between the social setting of booming agropastoralism and international exchange during the mid-third millennium that was now in decline and the rise of urban Amorite states in the early MBA, which is discussed in the next chapter. Although the number of excavated sites is relatively small from which to draw broader trends, our understanding of the closing two centuries of the third millennium in the northern Levant is dominated by the systematic abandonment of sites throughout the zone of uncertainty. As reviewed at the start of the chapter, this contributed to notable demographic changes in settlement patterns around Ebla. As major political centers during the late third millennium, with settlement through the late third millennium and into the early second millennium, Ebla, Byblos, and Arqa are therefore of central importance to understanding this transition in the northern Levant.

Ebla (Tell Mardikh IIB2) was rebuilt and continued to be settled after its destruction in 2350 BC and exhibits continuity in settlement plan and institutions. Palace G was not rebuilt, however, and evidently much of the remains of this phase of the settlement were destroyed in subsequent building efforts.[264] Most settlement of Ebla during the EB IVB (post-2350 BC) was confined to the northern half of the site and its fortifications.[265] The so-called Archaic

[264] Matthiae 2002; Dolce 2002.
[265] Dolce 1999.

Palace was constructed in this period, possibly during the Ur III, and continued in use through the MBA, though it was evidently destroyed around 2000 BC.[266] More impressive perhaps are the remains of the Temple of the Rock in Area HH, which were discussed in the preceding chapter. This temple reveals the cultural continuity between the so-called *in antis* type of the mid-third millennium and the later direct-axis temple type of the MBA.[267] Although no clear changes in the material culture of the site suggest associations with the arrival of displaced groups from the east (and probably should not be expected), traces of settlement on the site's eastern and southern sides represent additional settlement around the site that can be clearly seen in satellite imagery.[268] On the east this is bounded by a feature identified as an outer rampart, which enclosed an area of approximately an additional 14 ha of settlement (roughly 515 × 275 m), though no such feature encloses the remains of another extension of this settlement to the south of the site that is just as large. This nearly 30 ha expansion of Ebla's settlement was settled throughout the MBA and the presence of EB IVB sherds are suggestive of a possible initial settlement during the late third millennium, although excavations are required to confirm this. Despite what were certainly settlement disruptions in Ebla's landscape and possibly a significant expansion of its population in this period, nothing about Ebla's archaeology suggests a crisis resulting from the influx of settlement from its eastern territories.

Byblos, unfortunately, contributes less to a nuanced understanding of developments in the northern Levant during the final two centuries of the third millennium. While emissaries from Byblos appear among late third-millennium Ur III texts, its third-millennium maritime trade with Egypt evidently shut down entirely during the FIP (2190–1991 BC).[269] Byblos was unable to sustain its central role in maritime trade with Egypt – the so-called Byblos run,[270] as illustrated by an absence of traded items and references to them in either locale dated to this period.[271] These conditions appear to have been remembered later in MK Egyptian literature that was set during the FIP:

> None, indeed, sail north to Byblos today. What shall we do for cedar trees for our mummies?[272]

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[266] Matthiae 2006a.
[267] Matthiae 2007.
[268] See Burke 2008: 204; see also Matthiae and Marchetti 2013b: 29–30, figs. 0.2–0.4; Mantellini, Micael, and Peyronel 2013: 173–74, and 90, figs. 8.12–14, pls. 13.2, 21.2.
[269] Kitchen 1967.
[270] Stager 1992: 40–41.
[271] Ward 1971.
[272] *Admonitions of Ipuwer*; see *COS* 1, 94.

It seems that the temples of the *in antis* type that belong to the third quarter of the third millennium at Byblos persisted in use until the end of the EB IV (i.e., ca. 2000 BC).[273] These exemplars, like those at Ebla, are illustrative of the cultural ties that Amorite communities of the eastern margins of the Levant shared with communities throughout the Levant. Consequently, migration from the margins into more humid parts of the northern Levant had a not dissimilar impact on urban settlements as in southern Mesopotamia, where site sizes grew. The notable difference in the northern Levant was the more immediate cultural relationship between the relocating agropastoralists and the inhabitants of urban centers.

In the southern Levant, by contrast, the late third millennium (2200–2000 BC) was characterized by the abandonment of most of its urban centers, and with them almost all harbors along the coast. The material culture also yields a picture of mostly spartan conditions and socioeconomic stagnation. If the population peaked at around 60,000 inhabitants at the height of EB IV settlement during the mid-third millennium, as noted in the preceding chapter, the population west of the Jordan River during the last two centuries may well have been even less than one quarter of this.[274] At the density of approximately 100 persons per hectare, this would represent as little as 150 ha of settlement, mostly accounted for among an equally small number of villages and hamlets across a region of approximately 10,500 km². As a point of comparison, the estimated population of contemporaneous Ur III Umma in Sumer alone – based largely on textual sources – was between 15,000 and 20,000 persons, with a resulting density below 100 persons per hectare.[275] A largely ruralized landscape of small villages therefore likely represents a nadir in its overall population during the late EB IV, even though urban centers in the southern part of the Jordan Valley and Transjordan persisted.

On the whole, the data for the EB IV in the southern Levant takes the form of cemeteries that present burial assemblages of undifferentiated phasing. Owing to the length of the period this means that, as many cemeteries and burials as there are, this corpus accounts for approximately five hundred years of interments, and is therefore difficult to employ in estimating the region's population. While there is an increasing sense that the southern Levant did not experience a collapse in a traditional sense,[276] the persistent decline of the region as expressed in its duration and the onset of aridification in the region's margins during the last two centuries of the period suggests that it was likely a

[273] Sala 2014: 39–42.
[274] Gophna 1992: 156.
[275] Steinkeller 2017.
[276] Greenberg 2017. However, given the nature of the increasingly poor political, economic, and social conditions over the centuries of the EB IV, the southern Levant is arguably as good an example of collapse as one might find.

confluence of factors that conspired to delay a resurgence of urbanism in Canaan. Whether we call it a collapse or not, urbanism did not rebound until after 2000 BC and mostly after 1900 BC with the emergence of MK Egypt as a trade partner with the north coast.

Despite this situation, various aspects of continuity in the archaeological record of the southern Levant between the late EB IV and ensuing early MBA suggest that the social, economic, and political forces that shaped cultural developments in the late third millennium contributed to its gradual reintegration into wider circuits of exchange that ultimately led to the reintroduction of urban institutions and, with it, increasing social and political complexity. Furthermore, they reveal the important role that the northern Levant played in this process. Ceramics such as straight-sided cooking pots, one-spouted lamps, and cyma bowls of the EB IV and MB I traditions point to continuities in food preparation and other domestic practices as well as feasting.[277] Despite evident regionalism in the ceramic traditions of the northern and southern Levant,[278] aspects of continuity between these regions include drinking customs, as suggested by the common so-called Caliciform (i.e., chalice-shaped) tradition shared across both regions,[279] and yet remained distinct from Mesopotamian customs.

Of particular importance to the issue of continuity between the late third and early second millennia is the presence of individual, male cist graves or what, in some contexts, have been called "warrior" burials. These point to gradually increasing social connections between the northern Levant and Canaan. This burial type also finds parallels from Mesopotamia to the southern Levant, exposing the persistence of social and economic interactions between these regions despite the evident socioeconomic decline of Canaan. A substantial burial ground of EB IV burials of this type has been identified, for example, at Tell el-'Ajjul, on Canaan's south coast. Although dating these is difficult since radiocarbon samples were not collected, a recent study of them suggests that these exemplars belong to the late EB IV.[280] They are also attested at Jericho, Tell Umm Hammad, and Deganya A in the Jordan Valley as well as Batrawi and Tiwal esh-Sharqi east of these,[281] emphasizing their continuity with early MBA types and connections with the northern Levant, as discussed further in the next chapter. Prominent among such burials and among the major products of metallurgical crafts in this period are daggers and, more rarely, fenestrated axes. These also reveal considerable continuity

[277] D'Andrea 2015: 83–84; contra Dever 2014: 80, 36–37.
[278] D'Andrea 2014b: 141–221.
[279] Bunimovitz and Greenberg 2004.
[280] Kennedy 2015a.
[281] Tubb 1990; Prag 1995; Kennedy 2015b; and bibliography in Kennedy 2015a.

across these periods and throughout the region,[282] pointing, again, to increasing cultural exchange through a revival, if slowly, of trade networks.

Given the important role that economics played in political stability and control, the decline of economic indicators in the northern Levant suggests the diminished power of centers like Ebla and Byblos, which were economically dominant during the mid-third millennium. Evidently, the copper mines of the south, too, were inactive and, consequently, the "copper corridor" (see Chapter 2) ceased to operate. Although the decline of urban centers in the southern Levant had begun in earnest in the second quarter of the third millennium, the collapse of local political regimes that was accompanied by deteriorating conditions in marginal zones was dealt its death blow with the end of the OK (2191 BC). By this point the southern Levant was all but a backwater, inhabited by very few, small, mostly rural agropastoral communities, which evidently stagnated in the absence of both maritime and overland trade. The few economic opportunities that Egypt offered, including mercenarism, siphoned off still more of its population into the eastern Delta during the late third and early second millennium.

While the absence of textual sources means that we cannot ascribe a label to Canaan's inhabitants in the late third millennium, the region's limited population participated in social and economic networks of the northern Levant's urban centers and its Amorite communities. No meaningful boundaries existed to limit interactions between its inhabitants and urban centers such as Ebla and Byblos, as observed in other studies, or with Egypt.[283] Flight from late OK raids, the requirements of supporting the mining of copper and its transport (as well as flight following its eventual decline), the economic opportunities presented by urban centers throughout the northern Levant, a shift in pastoralist strategies (which did not altogether cease but simply declined), and overall shifts in subsistence strategies illustrate the various grounds that compelled various relocations of large parts of Canaan's population over the course of the EB IV. The interconnectedness of the Levant's regions are borne out by broader markers of its archaeological assemblage around which communities were centered as, for example, the direct-axis *in antis* temples described earlier. Consequently, the patterns of urbanism, decline, and reurbanization that are often interpreted as simply cyclical processes should be recognized, in fact, as the result of intraregional population movements due to a confluence of endogenous and exogenous factors – the "push" and "pull" factors behind late third millennium mobility. Although such movements have been previously identified almost exclusively with the mobility expected of pastoralists, a

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[282] Kaufman 2013.
[283] Bunimovitz and Greenberg 2004; Schloen 2017.

variety of factors contribute to a much more complex, yet integrated under-standing of the socioeconomic landscape of the Levant.

The foregoing reconstruction does not preclude, however, that other groups also played a role in the cultural identity of Levantine communities in the late third millennium.[284] However, the preponderance of evidence during the early second millennium argues against the identification of the Levant's inhabitants with other candidate groups, such as the Hurrians, which are only identified among later sources in the region. There is no clear basis for the identification of Hurrian culture, as can be identified at Urkesh in northern Mesopotamia, for example. Instead, a parallel and analogous process for the negotiation of early Hurrian identity should be sought in southern Anatolia to the north of the Jazira during this period. A significant Hurrian presence in the Levant remains therefore a late MBA phenomenon.[285]

In sum, inasmuch as we may wish to nuance our characterization of the identities of the Levant's inhabitants by the end of the third millennium, considering other alternatives, few named groups are left to choose from outside of those attested in the Ebla texts earlier and from later, MBA sources. There is little reason to doubt that much self-identification centered on association with polities such as Ebla or Byblos, or smaller, yet fortified enclaves in the southern Levant. However, such identities are more political than social, and they do not capture the nuances of towns inhabited by a variety of social groups. Although we may not be able to entirely isolate Amorite enclaves against the backdrop of local Levantine cultural traditions in the late third millennium, we can at least place them in the scene and begin to consider how such a social identity began to take shape there.

Into Egypt

The demographic decline of the southern Levant over the course of the second half of the third millennium is likely to be attributed to a number of factors, as previously mentioned. One significant, if poorly understood, region that played a role in this process was the eastern Nile Delta in the decades after 2200 BC. While earlier episodes of regional interactions can certainly be identified, these are not germane to what was a renewed period of intensive emigration that can be partially reconstructed for the late third millennium. Of significance in this connection is the recognition that the period of greatest decline of the southern Levant in the third millennium also coincides with the FIP (2190–1991 BC), a period of collapse of centralized authority in Egypt that featured increasing power by nomarchs, local rulers throughout the Nile

[284] Tubb 2009.
[285] Dever 1998.

Valley. Much like the contemporaneous Gutian and Ur III periods in Mesopotamia, it also created ample opportunity for the elevation of foreigners within Egypt's social landscape.[286] To a large extent, social circumstances in Egypt during this period mirrored those after the decline of the Akkadian Empire in southern Mesopotamia, during which non-natives were increasingly integrated into social, economic, and political structures. It is worthwhile, therefore, to turn our attention to the available data from Egypt that shed light on these events and the processes that underlay them. The trajectory of these developments was, in large part, already established before the FIP when circumstances such as warfare, trade, and various forms of service to Egypt's fragmented states opened up to foreigners.

In Egyptology until recently there has been relatively little concern with the implications of the integration of Asiatics in Egyptian society during the third millennium.[287] Rather, the principal focus has been on the identification of Asiatic names in Egyptian sources, particularly where individuals are also clearly qualified with one or another of the terms by which Asiatics were designated, some of which centered around their appearance and dress in OK reliefs.[288] One of the oldest terms, *sṯ.t*, dating to the First Dynasty, has been suggested by Donald Redford as a reference to "those who tie the shoulder knot."[289] Although it is assumed to be a pejorative reference, there is no reason that this should necessarily be so.

Terms for "east" and "easterners," such as *I3b.t*, attested from the MK on (after ca. 1991 BC), or *wbn.w*, which first appears in the Eighteenth Dynasty copy of the *Prophecies of Neferti*,[290] reveal a directional orientation akin to Amurru as "westerners," as with the geographic reference *ḥry.w-š'*, "those who live across the sand."[291] In both Akkadian and Egyptian there seems to have been little concern with further articulation of the identity of groups that lay beyond the borders of those doing the labeling. Only by the Sixth Dynasty (2374–2191 BC) were Asiatics given the moniker *'3mw*, which was more common from the MK on and was applied to Semitic speakers.[292] During the MK, this term was also employed for Asiatics in the *Wisdom of Merikare*, the *Tale of Sinuhe*, and Senwosret III's campaign against *Skmm*.[293] It was likely pronounced *'amu*, although the vocalization of ancient Egyptian is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, and attempts to identify foreign terms – as this is what

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[286] Seidlmayer 2000.
[287] See Bietak 2007b.
[288] Redford 1986: 125–26.
[289] Ibid.: 125. See also Mourad 2017.
[290] See, respectively, *Wb* 1, 30.15 and 1, 294.8–9.
[291] See Gundacker 2017.
[292] Schneider 2003: 5.
[293] See Lichtheim 1997a: 64; Lichtheim 1997b: 79; *ANET*, p. 230.

ꜥꜣmw seems to represent – are further complicated by a lack of certainty concerning other languages in which the term might be sought.

Various etymologies have been offered for ꜥꜣmw. Discounting the linguistic-ally misleading association of the term with the Asiatic throwstick that is employed as a determinative for Asiatic names, Redford has argued that the origin of the term was the West Semitic term ʿalamu, meaning "young man," which occurs as cognates in Amorite, Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Hebrew.[294] More recently it has been suggested that ꜥꜣmw might simply have entered Egyptian as an early corruption of the term amurru.[295] However, there exists a greater likelihood that ꜥꜣmw is a Semitic loanword word for a kin group, whether Amorite ʿammu, which is the OB word ʿammu/ḫammu for "people."[296] Others have dismissed the association of these terms as early as the Sixth Dynasty as simply too early to be likely.[297] Yet this ignores the broader cultural interactions that make this possible. Contemporaneous occur-rences of Amorite names and groups in Mesopotamian documentation, refer-ence to Amorites in the Ebla archives, and the potential that such groups inhabited significant parts of the Levant all provide a broad context for the possibility that ꜥꜣmw was an Amorite loanword in Egyptian. Nevertheless, the unifying characteristics of these proposals are the recognition of a clear Semitic linguistic association and that the term refers to individuals from Southwest Asia. Whatever the case may be, this term should be treated as a collective for Semites from Asia that quite often referred to social groupings of Amorites, if also other unidentified groups. This, then, would mirror the use of the term mar-tu, which already during the Ur III constituted a collective identity made up of distinct tribes. Whether or not the ꜥꜣmw per se can be directly identified with Amorite constituencies in the Levant or Mesopotamia may prove less significant than the realization that analogous contexts surrounded references to Amorites in the late third millennium in Egypt, which – as in Mesopotamia – included unchecked immigration and the employment of foreign mercenaries.

Various sources from the FIP suggest not only the presence of Asiatics in Egypt, particularly the Delta, but also the nature of their relationship to greater Egypt. The FIP created a political context primed for the employment of foreign mercenaries to serve in the various battles waged for territorial suprem-acy by different nomarchs. Sources make reference to both Nubians (medjay) and Asiatics (ꜥꜣmw) in this capacity. Ankhtifi, nomarch of the second and third

[294] Redford 1986: 132.
[295] See Saretta 2016: 14–21.
[296] Streck 2000: 92, §1.95. For Akkadian terms, see *ammu* in *CAD* A/2, p. 77 and *ḫammu* A in *CAD* Ḫ, p. 49.
[297] Schneider 2003: 5.

nomes during the Ninth Dynasty (from ca. 2165 BC), includes among his epithets "overseer of the mercenaries" and depicts Asiatic mercenaries in his tomb.[298] His inscriptions, while self-praising in the extreme, evoke a picture of social and political unrest that would not be unexpected during this period and may well be a relatively accurate portrayal of circumstances. Central to this context, of course, is the absence of any reference to the king.

Asiatics are also identified as the pretext for the existence of a collection of Egyptian fortresses known as the "Walls of the Ruler," that ran along the Ways of Horus (*Wȝwt Ḥr),* which were intended to repel Asiatics (*ʿȝmw*) or at the least to register and monitor them as they entered Egypt.[299] It is, however, apparent that during the FIP such a system, as with contemporaneous Ur III wall programs, proved ineffective as barriers to the incursion of outsiders. In the case of Ur, this may have been because it functioned to demarcate a border. However, the series of forts which constituted the "Walls of the Ruler" were probably intended to monitor and, when possible, check the advance of unwanted elements into Egypt proper.

If later literature such as the *Wisdom of Merikare,* which is traditionally associated with the reign of Akhtoy III, is given any historical utility, the Herakleopolitan Ninth and Tenth dynasties (2165–2040 BC) appear to have undertaken campaigns to the Delta in order to deal with Asiatics. By 2040, Nebhepetre Montuhotep I (2061–2011 BC) of the Eleventh Dynasty had captured Herakleopolis and was then able to turn his attention northward.[300] In his efforts to consolidate control over Upper Egypt, Montuhotep I employed Nubian mercenaries. Before his reconquest, the counterpart to the use of Nubian mercenaries in the north appears to have been the employ of Asiatic mercenaries. Support for this observation can be found in an inscription from Montuhotep's reign detailing his exploits against the Ninth Dynasty in the north, which was overrun with "sand-dwellers," one of many epithets for Asiatics from the Levant, as previously noted:

> Inscription which Tjehemau made. Year of smiting the foreign land of the south: I began to fight in the reign of [. . .] Nebhepetre in the army, (when) it went south to Buhen. My son went down with me towards the king. He traversed the entire land (for) he planned to exterminate the *ʿȝmw* of Djaty. (When) they approached, Thebes was in flight. It was the Nubian who brought about the rally. Then he overthrew Djaty. He raised sail sailing southwards.[301]

[298] Seidlmayer 2000: 119, 22–23.
[299] Valbelle 1994: 380.
[300] On the change of attribution of reunification from Montuhotep II to Montuhotep I, see Werner 2001.
[301] Brovarski and Murnane 1969: 11–20.

A tomb belonging to Intef, a general of Montuhotep, also illustrates Asiatics besieged and defeated by Egyptian troops.[302] Because there are no significant towns to speak of in the southern Levant during the late third millennium, Manfred Bietak suggests that the Asiatics depicted were mercenaries who were "employed to defend towns of the Herakleopolitans in the Delta."[303] Although to date no settlements of unequivocal association with Asiatics in the Delta during the FIP have been identified,[304] further support for this interpretation may be found in a number of depictions within contemporaneous tombs at Beni Hasan early in the MK, during the reign of Amenemhet I (see Chapter 4). Scenes from the tombs of Baqet III and Khety also reveal the extent to which Asiatic mercenaries were employed during this period.[305] A graffito likewise mentions a battle against Asiatics in a town called Djaty, in the inscription previously cited.

Asiatics, along with Nubians, appear to have served therefore as a reserve of men willing to participate in the defense of Lower Egypt under the rulers of the Ninth Dynasty against Montuhotep I's efforts to conquer the north. The employ of Asiatics in such contests over a number of decades not only drew Delta Asiatics into this conflict but, especially because of the depressed economic environment of the southern Levant in the late third millennium, it likely encouraged a steady flow of young Asiatic males to Egypt to participate in this conflict. Such circumstances precede, therefore, what would become a long-term infiltration of the Delta by increasing numbers of Asiatics during the MK, as attested at Avaris.

It is of little surprise, then, that Montuhotep I's successor, Montuhotep II (2011–2000 BC), extended the purge of Asiatics from the Sinai, as referenced in a handful of inscriptions.[306]

> His flames fell among the foreign land[s] ... the foreign lands were hastening ... the hinterlands ... were blocked and the Qedem lands were closed; ... [the easterners came(?)] bowing head(?) at the banks of the sea.[307]

The sustained concern of Asiatic incursions of the type encountered in the years prior to Mentuhoptep II's reign (2011–2000 BC) is substantiated by his efforts to reconstruct Egypt's eastern frontier with the so-called Walls of the Ruler. This wall system or, more likely, a series of fortresses had fallen into

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[302] For description and sources, see Gaballa 1976: 38–39, fig. 3. See illustrations in Tomb of Intef (no. 386.) in folding plans 1 and 3 in Jaroš-Deckert 1984: pl. 1.

[303] Bietak 2006: 289.

[304] M. Bietak suggests identifying Tell Ibrahim Awad, northwest of Tell ed-Dab'a, as such a site. See ibid.: 290–91.

[305] Beni Hasan tombs 15 and 17; see Newberry 1894: pls. 5 and 15.

[306] For Dendera Chapel inscription, see *CAH* 1/2, pp. 480–82, also Hall 1986: figs. 23–25.

[307] Fischer 1964: 114.

disrepair and had been abandoned during the FIP. However, because the overland passage through the northern Sinai was fairly narrow, as evidenced by recent work connected with the Ways of Horus,[308] these defenses were less formidable than they might sound. According to the *Tale of Sinuhe*, which is set in the MK, Asiatics were required to register their entry into Egypt. Although there is no unequivocal evidence to indicate that Asiatic infiltration along this route presented a violent threat during this period, these incursions were characterized very negatively in later MK literature, which sought to play upon such sentiments and yet acknowledges the presence of Asiatics in Egypt (see Chapter 4).[309] That trade relations played a limited role in exchanges between the Levant and Egypt during the reign of Montuhotep II is suggested by a military expedition to Lebanon to get timber, if reconstructed correctly, by the pharaoh's chief steward, Henenu.[310] Montuhotep's military accomplishments had not only brought Egypt under a central political authority and created the basis for unified rule during the Twelfth Dynasty, but in doing so also sought to limit what appears to have been a period of substantial meddling by Asiatics in Egyptian affairs.

[308] Hoffmeier and Moshier 2006.
[309] See *Wisdom of Merikare*, Lichtheim 1997a: 64.
[310] See esp. Hayes 1949: 49.

FOUR

MERCENARIES AND MERCHANTS

Networks of Political and Economic Power, 2000–1800 BC

Although circumstances at the end of the third millennium provided ample opportunities for socioeconomic advancement of foreign communities in Mesopotamia and Egypt, the achievement of political power by Amorite factions early in the second millennium did not immediately follow. The wresting of political power across southern Mesopotamia, for instance, when it did occur, was neither linear nor simultaneous, requiring at least a century to occur in southern Mesopotamia and the Levant. In both cases we are reliant on historical sources to make this transition clear. The mechanisms behind the emergence and gradual advancement of Amorite rule are mostly invisible. On the one hand, this is because Amorite rulers willingly embraced many of the traditions of their Mesopotamian predecessors, modeling their kingships on Akkadian and Ur III examples. Thus, continuity of traditions played an important role in obscuring their rise to political power. On the other hand, Amorite political power was rooted in factionalism, principally on tribal institutions for which we lack independent records. Those Amorites we do hear about hold positions with military power, which was an essential platform for defection from the Ur III state.
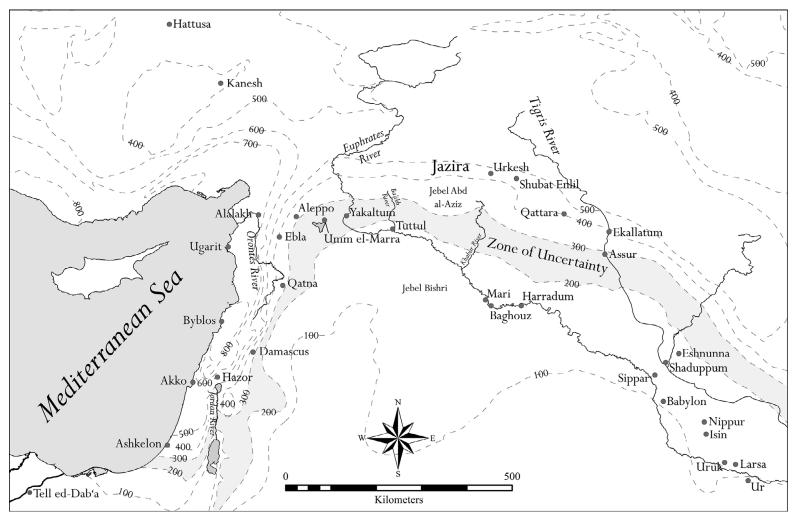
Wider regional hegemony as achieved by Amorite rulers after Ur resulted from territorial expansions focused on the military conquest of neighboring states. These territorial ambitions were not, however, restricted to militarily endeavors. Military engagements were, instead, among a range of peer-polity

interactions that gave shape to the emerging Amorite age.[1] Kings also spon-sored and sanctioned increasingly frequent and far-ranging exchanges of per-sonnel, whether through the activities of merchants, court emissaries, or craftspeople. Where records permit, as in the case of the Old Assyrian (OA) trade colonies, trade is shown to have been an extremely political endeavor, driven by a fierce loyalty to the interests of the merchant's home state. Merchants seem to have worked primarily for and on behalf of the interests of the states to which they belonged, even if some independent trading took place on the side. Still, the activities of merchant organizations abroad created an unprecedented degree of social entanglement between communities from the Persian Gulf to the Egyptian Delta. In the context of interactions between the states they represented, it appears to have fostered competitive emulation among elites that is reflected in the embracing of an *oikoumene* of customs that gradually transcended the levels of the social hierarchies within these communities.

Together, these types of social interactions created a multiplier effect of cultural exchanges with the result that by the early second millennium eastern traditions, whose origins can be identified in late third-millennium Mesopotamia, were introduced into Levantine and even MK Egyptian con-texts. Within this *oikoumene* these exchanges were not simply restricted to peer-polity interactions among states within a relatively discrete geographic region. Rather, they engaged a broad swath of highly mobile elites and an increasing percentage of the less mobile members of urban Near Eastern communities. The reach of mercantile and mercenary activities meant that a wider section of society was increasingly drawn into social and cultural exchanges with elites and their households. The geographic extent of this *oikoumene* and its cosmopolitan character, which was perhaps only rivaled by analogous circumstances during the Neo-Assyrian Period, is also remarkable in that it emerged in the absence of an imperial framework.

THE RISE OF AMORITE POLITICAL POWER, 2000–1930 BC

On the heels of the collapse of the Ur III state, new opportunities emerged for political and military power within many large urban centers throughout Mesopotamia and the Levant (Figure 4.1). In the wake of the Gutian and Sumerian dynasties, a third phase of political experimentation after Akkad witnessed the rise of a new group of elites with wider regional aspirations. Isin under the leadership of Ishbi-Erra stepped into this void, while a small group of Amorite leaders, in the footsteps of figures such as Naplanum of Larsa,

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[1] Ilan 1995a.

4.1 Map of sites discussed in chapter, ca. 2000–1800 BC
Map by Amy Karoll.

gradually assumed control of communities of which they had been long-standing members. If anything favored the political ascendance of Amorite factions in an environment where often fewer than 10 percent of the population was Amorite, it was the filling of positions in government service within the former Ur III state. Such circumstances facilitated a gradual increase in political and military power by Amorite military figures among many of the largest Mesopotamian city-states by the end of the twentieth century BC. This power was supported by factions, evidently centered on tribal organizations, from which individual Amorite leaders appear to have emerged. The role of Amorites in mercenary service during the early second millennium as part of the aggregation of power is in evidence not only in Mesopotamia, but also in Egypt, where early Amorite enclaves also took shape.

Isin and the Amorites

Although it continues to debated whether Ishbi-Erra (2017–1985 BC), the first king of Isin after the fall of Ur, was himself an Amorite, in the absence of overt labels it appears that at the start of the twentieth century Amorite identity did not yet play the central role in dynastic identity and legitimation that it did toward the end of the same century. Neither among royal inscriptions nor even in the Sumerian King List, of which a copy is preserved from late in the Isin Dynasty, did Isin's rulers attempt to claim an Amorite pedigree in a fashion comparable to the genealogies of the Assyrian King List or of Hammurapi, both of which appeared only in the eighteenth century BC.

Amorite identity appears to have largely remained that of a minority of individuals and marginal social groups during Isin's domination in the twentieth century BC. During the early OB Period Amorite names account for a mere 8 percent of attested names.[2] Larsa, under a series of rulers after Naplanum, who remained subject to Isin's overlordship, was the only major urban center known to be under Amorite rule in this early period. Following Naplanum, various rulers, such as Zabaya of Larsa (1941–1933 BC), retained the title *rabían* mar-tu ("mar-tu chief"), signaling their association with the Amorites of the Ur III.[3]

Mari's early second-millennium Shakkanakku rulers also offer no explicit clues as to their identity. That rule by Amorite figures immediately after the fall of Ur, during the first century of the second millennium, was by no means a fait accompli is also illustrated by examples of direct resistance to Amorite efforts to gain control of certain centers. Eshnunna, for example, appears to have resisted Amorite hegemony during the twentieth century BC, despite

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[2] de Boer 2014a: 64.
[3] *RIME* 4.2.4.1, p. 112.

close relations with one Amorite ruler, Abda-El, the details of which are preserved in OB letters from Eshnunna.[4] Nur-aḫum, the first ruler of Eshnunna after the fall of Ur, married his daughter to Ushashum, who was the son of Abda-El, an Amorite chief (Akk. *rabīan amurrim*).[5] Abda-El also married his daughter to the son of a later ruler of Eshnunna, Bilalama, who would, however, later go to war against Amorites.[6] A series of his year names reveals the changing relationship of the dynasty to Amorite factions early during the second millennium:[7]

> [Year] 55 "MAR.DÚ smote "The Field of Ibbi-Sin" (reign of Kirikiri)
>
> . . .
>
> [Year] 64 (Bilalama) "MAR.DÚ sacked Ishur"
>
> [Year] 65 (Bilalama) "MAR.DÚ entrusted to Bilalama the rule of Ishur"
>
> [Year] 66 (Bilalama) "MAR.DÚ smote Ka-Ibaum upon the head"
>
> [Year] 67 (Bilalama) "MAR.DÚ smote Ka-Ibaum"
>
> [Year 68] (Bilalama) "MAR.DÚ sacked Ka-Ibaum"
>
> [Year 70] (Bilalama) "Bilalama, *ishakku* of Eshnunna, inflicted a gaping wound on the head of MAR.DÚ"
>
> [Year 81] "MAR.DÚ made submission"

The various political contexts in which Amorites appear during the first century after the fall of Ur highlight a future far from certain for Amorite communities, quite apart from the question of rule by any individuals identified as Amorite. But these contexts also reveal the presence of groups who were negotiating their political and social identities within various polities that were themselves undergoing turbulence. The collapse of Ur and the efforts of emergent elites to legitimate their political power expose, therefore, the early second millennium in Mesopotamia as a period of considerable social, political, and economic uncertainty.

Royal Legitimation after Ur

After the fall of Ur, Isin's rulers were compelled to demonstrate their legitimacy by means of association with traditional symbols and acts of Mesopotamian kingship. It has long been observed, for example, that early OB styles and traditions emulated Ur III styles, which were fundamentally a part of broader efforts to legitimize new dynasties, notably from the First Dynasty of Isin on. The range of traditions most often discussed under this rubric includes

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[4] See esp. letters 6 to 12 in Whiting 1987.

[5] *RIME* 4.5.1.2.

[6] Whiting 1987: 27.

[7] Frankfort, Lloyd, Jacobsen, et al. 1940: 175–82.

inscribed royal monuments, seal styles, law collections, the promulgation of official king lists, and temple construction.[8] As such, the adoption of this repertoire by Amorite rulers during the centuries that followed played an essential role in the legitimation of their dynasties throughout Mesopotamia and neighboring regions, such as the Levant.

Although Ishbi-Erra did not succeed in restoring the full extent of Ur's territorial claims, he nonetheless embraced the title "king of the four quarters."[9] He was also viewed as divine, comparable to deified members of the Ur III line. In addition, administrative and ritual practices, rather unsurprisingly, resembled Ur III efforts. While he and his immediate successors maintained considerable control over the southern alluvial plain, including Ur, Uruk, and Nippur, other territories such as Assur and Mari remained beyond Isin's control. Altogether the Isin Dynasty clearly sought to imitate "Ur III imperial style."[10] Nevertheless, his year names reveal a persistent struggle against Ur's Amorite foes, if such can be read into his names for years 8 and 9, respectively known as "the year the mar-tu city was destroyed" and "the year after the mar-tu city was destroyed."[11] To the extent that Ishbi-Erra may himself be identified as Amorite, being labeled "the man from Mari" (see Chapter 3), a conflict with a group of mar-tu may be understood in different ways. Were these mar-tu simply a continuation of the Third Dynasty of Ur's troubles with such groups? Or do they reflect factionalism among Amorite groups? Either way, these events foreshadow future conflicts between Amorite rulers.

The Sumerian King List, as discussed in the preceding chapter, was evidently a scribal production composed no later than the Ur III. During the early OB Period, however, it continued to be employed by the kings of Isin, functioning as a political charter.[12] Copies are attested from the late nineteenth century, during the reign of Damiq-Ilishu of Isin (1816–1794 BC), the last king of Isin listed. The extant lists, of course, leave out the competing, contemporary dynasty of Larsa, and in so doing reveal the function of such lists, which characterize kingship as bestowed upon or withdrawn from particular cities by the gods. If the genre had been more widely adopted, one could imagine a large number of variants associated with different Mesopotamian cities. The Sumerian King List was therefore a distinctly Sumerian innovation, a charter that was especially tailored to a political landscape like Sumer where antiquity was synonymous with legitimacy.

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[8] Kuhrt 1995: 76–78.
[9] *RIME* 4.1.1.2005.
[10] Kuhrt 1995: 76.
[11] https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yearnames/HTML/T8K1.htm.
[12] Michalowski 1983.

Other genres of literature also came to serve political ends in legitimating Isin's rule. A genre known as city laments sought to emphasize the withdrawal of divine favor from the Ur III kings, and that the rulers who restored them were thereby affirmed as having received divine favor. Two of the most famous of this genre are *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* and *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*,[13] although variously preserved laments are attested for a number of other cities, including Uruk, Eridu, and Nippur.[14] Though some of these laments appear to have been officially employed in cultic rites, the city laments and their historicizing references reveal their development as a literary genre, which were primarily preserved in OB scribal schools in later centuries.[15]

Ur III seal styles, which influenced early second-millennium seal designs, also played an important role in the conveying of status and perceptions of legitimacy, as Isin's rulers and other early OB dynasts emulated these styles. Ur III seal iconography already exposed a considerable reduction or streamlining in themes and elements from the Akkadian Period. Whether in the reduction of the range of extant themes or the reduced number of elements such as options for headdresses and hairstyles, the presentation scene appears to have become the primary, although not exclusive, focus of seal themes during the Ur III, which continued during the early OB Period.[16] The geographic distribution of this seal style is impressive, with exemplars from across the Near East (Figure 4.2).[17] Arguably, such efforts at simplification in seal design during the Ur III reveal the deliberate appropriation of widely recognized and codified markers identified with legitimate and revered Mesopotamian states of the past.

Seals, despite their functional value as tools of authentication for administrative and legal practices, also represent miniature works of art and thus functioned as a type of monument, leaving their impressions on viewers across a wide geographic expanse. As such, the messages they conveyed were usually associated with figures of authority and power but, in particular, the relationship between the individual and their patron god. During the early second millennium, seal styles widely continued third-millennium traditions. A large corpus of seals from this period demonstrates that already at the start of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA), styles and scilliographic practices were being shared across a wide territory through extensive trade networks. Anatolia, for example, saw increased use of cylinder seals that may be largely attributed to

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[13] Michalowski 1989; Samet 2014.
[14] Samet 2014: 4–5.
[15] Ibid.: 2–3.
[16] Collon 1982: 130–34.
[17] Collon 1986: 1.
[18] Larsen and Lassen 2014: 180–81, fig. 12.1.

4.2 Presentation scenes on early Middle Bronze Age cylinder seals from (1) Assur, (2) Kanesh, (3) Tuttul, (4) Hattusa, and (5) Ashkelon.

Sources: Lassen 2014: 109, fig. 1 and 110, fig. 2; Otto 2004: pl. 39a; Teissier 1996: 105, seal 208; Alizadeh 2008: 572, fig. 31.2. Illustration by Amy Karoll

the presence of OA merchant colonies.[18] The so-called classic OA style has been shown to derive from the Ur III seals that preceded it.[19] However, within a generation, hybrid styles of seals are attested at Kanesh, the so-called Old Assyrian 2 style, in which Anatolian glyptic fused with the arrived OA style, revealing the complex interplay of influences within this artifact type.[20] Yet one group of Anatolian-produced seals at Kanesh, for example, seems to argue for an earlier stage of direct copying of Ur III or Isin-Larsa styles that illustrates the processes of cultural exchange already in the late third millennium BC, preceding the OA colonies. This resulted in a hybrid style of Anatolian seal, borrowing Babylonian motifs but organizing them in manner beyond clear classification.[21]

Old Assyrian seal iconography of the twentieth and nineteenth centuries BC also adapted the introduction scene from the seals of Ur III officials.[22] In such scenes a goddess leads the seal owner before the Ur III ruler. Eppihimer puts the adoption of the Ur III style not later than the reign of the OA king Erishum I (1972–1933 BC). Yet as she notes, the adoption of iconography was not one-to-one, and certain elements such as the horned crown were left out.[23] Eppihimer's study also reveals that the presentation scene suggests Ashur's more limited integration into the Ur III state by comparison to Eshnunna, for example, where the Ur III audience scene, which was more typical of Ur III administrators, was adopted during the OB Period.[24] Ashur reveals that "individuals besides the ruler were able to employ imagery in their seals that was similar to, although not identical with, the scene on the ruler's seals."[25] These observations provide an apt example of the local contexts in which the appropriation of iconography occurred, the selectivity that is indicative of the intentionality of the process, and its association, first and foremost, with rulers and elites such as merchants in the wake of the collapse of the Ur III state.

Isin's rulers even appear to have followed in the footsteps of the Ur III regime as it concerned expressions of social order and jurisprudence. Among the sources are the *Laws of Lipit-Ishtar* from Isin dated to ca. 1930 BC.[26] The importance of these laws appears to have been internally referenced, but certainly underscored, as a year name of Lipit-Ishtar makes clear: he "made

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[19] See Lassen 2012: chap. 3.
[20] Larsen and Lassen 2014: 181–83, figs. 12.2 and 12.3.
[21] Ibid.: 183–84, fig. 12.6.
[22] Collon 1987: 41–44; Eppihimer 2013.
[23] Eppihimer 2013: 44.
[24] Ibid.: 46.
[25] Ibid.: 48.
[26] Roth 1997: 23–35.
[27] Translation from http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki.

justice in Sumer and Akkad."[27] The prologue to these laws, and those of Ur-Nammu before him, underscored the king's role to "establish justice in the land," principally, it seems, by means of the declaration of civil law. As with Ur-Nammu's laws, Sumerian remained the written language employed, and the loci of its later preservation were OB scribal schools. This is particularly evident among a number of copies of selections of laws written in Sumerian during the early second millennium.[28] Among other things, the *Laws of Lipit-Ishtar* reveal the continuation of the established social order of third-millennium Sumer, retaining the rights of the free person (lú) as the primary concern of the legal tradition, with recognition of slaves (arad/géme), but now also introducing the *miqtu*, palace dependents or clients, likely presaging the appearance of the *muškenum* late in Hammurapi's laws.

Despite Isin's efforts to legitimate its rule in southern Mesopotamia, its decline was bound to the tensions that existed in political control of the Mesopotamian landscape dating back to the Akkadian Period. At that time, Akkad's earliest rulers only through considerable force managed to subjugate their neighbors and to continue to enforce their rule, when necessary by military means. After Akkad, however, no state had managed to do so as effectively or for any considerable duration. Thus, the decline of Isin in the late twentieth century BC constituted no less than the third such attempt in more than two centuries to follow in Akkad's footsteps.

Tribalism and Mercenarism in Amorite Power

The political ascendance of Amorites in the late twentieth century BC would appear to be, on the surface, just another in a long string of efforts to establish dynasties in southern Mesopotamia. This would be a sufficient characterization were it not for the fact that Amorite political efforts expose the clear support of substantive factions, namely tribal groups, as well as military factions such as mercenary and professional military units to which many Amorites belonged. These streams, the origins of which can be traced back to the late third millennium, not only appear to have reached a critical mass during the early second millennium, but they also intersected with the evident failure of Isin to succeed Ur, leaving the door open for Amorite experiments in regional hegemony.

At Larsa, it was only under Gungunum (1932–1906 BC) that independence from Isin was achieved, albeit through relatively obscure circumstances, and thereafter that opportunities opened for political hegemony by a number of Amorite rulers. Gungunum's biography reveals a continuation of

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[28] Roth 1997: 36–54.

administrative service as a means to achieving this power. His father had, so it seems, served as a governor of the province of Lagash, in which Larsa was located. Larsa's wresting of Ur from Isin, however, cemented the regime's place with respect to its earlier overlord, Ur, and Isin. Within this context it is also noteworthy that the two generals serving Gungunum in the campaign to take Ur served as the next two Amorite kings of Larsa: Abisare (1905–1895 BC) and Sumu-el (1894–1865 BC).[29] Furthermore, by the start of the rule of Sumu-el, Sumuabum (1894–1881 BC), an Amorite military leader, who was identified in earlier scholarship as the founder of Babylon's First Dynasty, seems to have been responsible, to one extent or another, for the establishment of almost one hundred rulers, many Amorites, across northern Babylonia and southern Diyala.[30] Even with later disruptions of the dynastic line at Larsa, rulers like Warad-Sin (1834–1822 BC), the son of Kudur-Mabuk of the Amorite Emutbalum tribe, claimed Amorite affiliation through explicit ancestral reference as "father of the Amorite land" as well as "father of Emutbala,"[31] an Amorite tribe around Larsa. Isin's gradual loss of regional power culminated in its own conquest (1792 BC) in the thirtieth year of Rim-Sin I (1822–1763 BC), the last king of Larsa's dynasty.[32]

Other paths to Amorite rule are also attested during the nineteenth century in Mesopotamia. Although not without some uncertainty, Sin-kashid (1865–1833 BC), the founder of a new dynasty at Uruk, appears to have made himself an ally by marriage with the Amorite dynasty at Babylon. It is likely that he was also preceded as ruler of the city by two other poorly attested Amorites.[33] The rise of Sin-kashid, who was also hailed as "king of the Amnanu," demonstrates his explicit claim to affiliation with the well-known Amorite tribe, Amnanum.[34] Elsewhere in Mesopotamia Amorite kingship was also becoming increasingly common as individuals were likely drawn from local tribal groups that had become fixtures of their communities. Me-Turran as well as Marad-Kazallu were ruled by Amorite dynasties from the nineteenth century BC on,[35] and other Amorite rulers from unknown locals in southern Mesopotamia directly reference their Amorite tribal affiliations, including Didanum (i.e., Tidnum).[36] Only after the late nineteenth century, following the rise of a dynasty under Yaggid-Lim, father of Yaḫdun-Lim (1810–1794 BC), who bore the Akkadian title "king" can Mari's rulers unequivocally be

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[29] Fitzgerald 2002.
[30] de Boer 2018: 61.
[31] *RIME* 4.2.13.3 and 4.2.13.15.
[32] Kuhrt 1995: 78.
[33] Frayne 1990: 439.
[34] *RIME* 4.4.1.2, etc.
[35] *RIME* 4.16.1; de Boer 2013.
[36] Ammi-ishtamar (see *RIME* 4.0.1).

identified as Amorite.[37] Even so, Yaḫdun-Lim's own rise to power from the Sim'alite tribe remains obscure.[38] Nevertheless, within the space of about two generations, at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century BC, Amorite rulers sat on the thrones of Larsa, Babylon, Ur, Uruk, and a number of other centers in southern and central Mesopotamia.

A critical component in the consolidation of Amorite rule was backing by larger social groupings and populations, whose political clout in the south appears to have grown at the same time as the decline of Isin. These are usually identified as tribes, but characterizations of social structure based on termin-ology, as demonstrated in the corpus of texts from Mari, are not always straightforward.[39] The Emutbalum, Amnanum, and Didanum are among the most conspicuous groups in the south, while in the region of Mari other groups were emerging and consolidating their power as factions. In the eighteenth century BC, during the reign of the Sim'alite king of Mari, Zimri-Lim, the Yaminite confederacy consisted of tribes of the Yariḫum, Yaḫrurum, Rabbum, and Uprapum as well as elements of the aforementioned Amnanum.[40] Thus, in later texts confederacies between tribes expose the role of alliances between tribes as a means of expanding and consolidating political power. Nevertheless, with legitimation increasingly derived from traditional seats of power among Mesopotamia's urban centers, affiliations with these groups gradually became less significant politically, and the titles associated with these entities "were eclipsed by local epithets" that were applied to Amorite rulers.[41]

In addition to the evidence of tribal and factional associations that contrib-uted to Amorite power, there is ample evidence of the role that military service played in creating reservoirs of power for Amorite leaders early in the OB Period. This evidence points to the transition between the mercenary service of Amorites during the late third millennium for the Ur III state and an increasing formalization of military service within Amorite-controlled states during the OB Period. The formal capacity of Amorite service is best docu-mented in a series of military posts whose titles were directly affiliated with Amorite identity by means of the term mar-tu.[42] While over time they likely lessened in their value as markers of social affiliation, serving instead to indicate military ranks, these terms serve as yet another waypoint in the transition of Amorite identity away from a state-ascribed ethnic identity toward a broader

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[37] *RIME* 4.6.7.2001, p. 601.
[38] Charpin 2004: 137.
[39] Fleming 2004: 43–103.
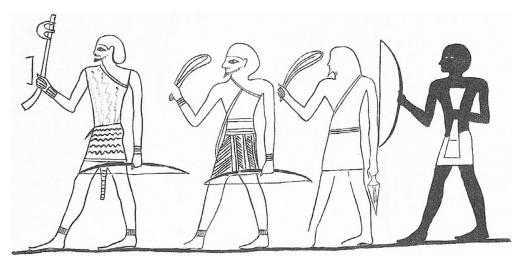[40] Anbar 1991: 83–85.
[41] Fleming 2004: 124.
[42] See de Boer 2014a: 186–88, and bibliography therein.

social identity by the early MBA. The most robust documentation of these titles belongs to the Mari archives during the eighteenth century BC, where we find leadership posts such as gal mar-tu and later the ugula mar-tu (*šapir amurrim*), which occurs only from the reign of Hammurapi alongside the gal mar-tu. Both are sometimes rendered as *rabi amurrim* or "chief of the Amorites" and are identified as the highest of military positions in the OB Period, where the former commanded as many as one thousand men and the latter about three hundred.[43] At least by the mid-eighteenth century, the gal mar-tu was served by a "scribe of the Amorites" (dub-sar mar-tu, *ṭupšar amurrim*), according to the Mari letters.[44]

The office of *rabiānum* ("chief") or *rabiān amurrim* ("chief of the Amorites"), which is attested as early as the reign of Ishbi-Erra of Isin, appears to perpetuate this position from the Ur III.[45] However, it also occurs at Sippar later, among other places, and appears to have a wide range of meanings, including "town chief." Yet another title, sag-gal mar-tu-meš or "field marshal of the Amorites,"[46] is attested for a figure from Yamḫad in texts from Shubat Enlil. "Amorite foot soldier" (aga-ús mar-tu) and *mandu* soldiers are attested in Diyala and Larsa, and eren$_2$ mar-tu in Iran and Babylonia.[47] During the reign of the Amorite king of Babylon, Sumula-el (1880–1845 BC), the term *amur-rūtum alākum* was already being employed in reference to fulfilling military service as part of one's *ilkum*, or corvée obligation.

In Egypt, a similar role for military service is witnessed in the rise of Amorite political power. More Asiatics were employed throughout the civil war that led to the establishment of the MK state by 1991 BC. After this period, Egypt emerged as a single state, once again ruled by a single pharaoh.[48] However, Egypt had already become home to a considerable population from Southwest Asia, much of whom bore linguistically Amorite names,[49] signaling their broader social affiliation with those identified as Asiatics among Egyptian sources during this period. The reasons for their presence in Egypt vary, and the failures of urban centers in the southern Levant in the second half of the third millennium likely contributed to some of this migration, as reviewed in the preceding chapter. Some may have also come down to Egypt later as refugees from Canaan's marginal zones as it underwent a protracted period of aridification, owing to deteriorating climatic conditions after 2200 BC. This might explain part of the decline in population of Canaan during the latter half

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[43] Stol 2004: 805–11.
[44] See de Boer 2014a: 186–87n729.
[45] Stol 1976: 73–89; Seri 2006: 51–96.
[46] de Boer 2014a: 187.
[47] Ibid.
[48] For Egyptian dates, see Redford 2001.
[49] Schneider 2003.

4.3 Asiatic mercenaries in Tomb of Khnumhotep (no. 14) at Beni Hasan.
Source: Newberry 1893: pl. 47. Public domain

of the EB IV (2200–2000 BC) that accompanied the dispersal of communities from urban centers centuries earlier. However, it also provides a context for understanding the willingness of Asiatic males to accept employment as mercenaries during the First Intermediate Period (FIP, 2190–1991 BC), as mentioned in the preceding chapter and evidenced in the tombs of nomarchs Baqet III and Khety. To these are added early MK depictions of Asiatic warriors in the tombs of Khnumhotep I and Amenemhat, also at Beni Hasan (Figure 4.3).[50] Khnumhotep had assisted the pharaoh Amenemhet I in his struggle against such figures.[51]

Asiatics, Early Middle Kingdom Egypt, and the Levant

Early in the MK (1991–1786 BC) pharaohs appear to have inaugurated military campaigns into Canaan, which can only be partially reconstructed, but that likely played an instrumental role in the consolidation of Amorite political power in the Levant. Military forays into Canaan by early MK rulers starting in the first century of the second millennium BC also provide a basis for suggesting a renewed influx of Asiatics, who were taken captive from Levantine communities. These campaigns were also likely the context for the construction and maintenance of fortresses along the overland route through the northern Sinai. While it is impossible to point to anything like

[50] Newberry 1893; see also Saretta 2016.
[51] Breasted 1906: vol. 2, 225.

TABLE 4.1. *Milestones in Middle Kingdom relations with Asiatics*

Pharaoh	Dates BC	Developments and Sources
Amenemhet I	1991–1962	Depictions of Asiatic mercenaries in tombs of Baqet III, Khety, and Khnumhotep (nos. 15, 17, and 14), Beni Hasan; *Prophecy of Neferti* ("Walls of the Ruler" built?); Avaris founded; Raids in southern Levant
Senwosret I	1971–1928	*Instruction of King Amenemhet I*; N. border maintained, Sinai campaigns (*ARE* 1.§532); Ezbet Rushdi, Egyptian settlement (Avaris); Internal(?) struggles with Asiatics; Setting of *Tale of Sinuhe*
Amenemhet II	1929–1895	Execration Texts coverage begins; Levant raid (Mit Rahina inscription); Asiatic slaves taken
Senwosret II	1897–1877	Itinerant Asiatics (Tomb of Khnumhotep, Beni Hasan)
Senwosret III	1878–1843	*Skmm* raid
Amenemhet III	1843–1797	Execration Texts coverage ends?; Asiatic slaves (Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446); Byblos Tombs I–IV; Expedition to Byblos and Ullaza (Dashur inscription, Khnumhotep III)
Amenemhet IV	1798–1790	?
Sobekneferu	1790–1786	?

an Egyptian Empire in Canaan, the proxy evidence for Egypt's military intervention in Canaan during the MK continues to grow, revealing a lacuna in earlier understandings of Egyptian-Asiatic relations during the MK.[52] The evidence consists, in the first place, of direct references to campaigns and raids against Levantine communities as preserved during the reigns of Amenemhet I (1991–1962 BC), Amenemhet II (1929–1895 BC), and Senwosret III (1878–1843 BC; Table 4.1).[53] It may even be that these Egyptian campaigns can be correlated with specific destructions of MBA sites in Canaan.[54]
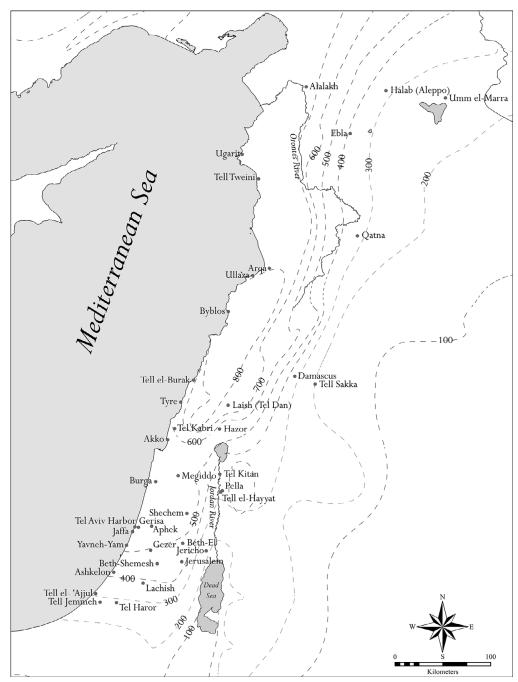
Additional evidence for the context of MK military intervention in Canaan is found in the Execration Texts (see cover art), which are often referenced in connection with the names of Amorite rulers and the towns they ruled in the southern Levant (Figure 4.4).[55] These texts associated a number of named

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[52] See bibliography in Marcus 2007. These studies build upon earlier work; see James Weinstein (1975); Alan Schulman (1982: 176–78); Donald Redford (1992a: 76–82).
[53] See *ARE* 1.§479; Marcus 2007; Allen 2008; Mourad 2013: 44; *ANET*, p. 230.
[54] Burke 2008: 98–100.
[55] Redford 1992b: 87–93; Ritner 1997; Rainey and Notley 2006: 52–53, 58.

4.4 Map of early Middle Bronze Age sites in the Levant discussed in this chapter.
Map by Amy Karoll

Asiatics with different towns in Canaan. Dated from the reign of Amenemhet
II (1929–1895 BC) and after, they consist of a series of bowls and figurines that
list foreign enemies of Egypt, among them Asiatics whose names are linguistic-
ally Amorite and who are identified as the rulers of various cities in the Levant.

The bowls from the Nubian fortress at Mirgissa,[56] which date to the reigns of Amenemhet II or early in Senwosret III's reign (1878–1843 BC) and mention five places, are earlier than the Berlin collection,[57] which dates to the reigns of Senwosret III or early during the reign of Amenemhet III (1878–1843 BC) and mentions twenty towns. Even later than these are the Brussels group,[58] which run into the Thirteenth Dynasty (from ca. 1786 BC), the early eighteenth century, with reference to sixty-two placenames and their rulers that include execration figurines (see cover art for example). Following scrutiny of these texts, the conclusions, as is the case for the genre as a whole,[59] are that they reflect a nuanced understanding of the political geography at the time of their writing, taking care to be particularly specific about the names of rulers and their cities,[60] lest the execration rituals be inefficacious.

> The ruler of ʿIrqatum, *I'wmqqhti*, and all the stricken ones who are with him.
> The ruler of Ashkelon, *Ḫktnw* (?), and all the stricken ones who are with him.
> . . . The ruler of Jerusalem, Yaqar-ʿAmmu, and all the stricken ones who are with him.
> The ruler of Jerusalem, Seti-ʿAnu, and all the stricken ones who are with him.
> . . . All the Asiatics of Byblos, of Ullaza of Iyanq, of Shutu, of *ʾIymwʿrrw*, of *Qhrmw*, of *Arhâbu*, of Yarmût, of *ʾInhi'*, of *ʾqhi*, of ʿIrqatum, ... of *Isinw*, of *Ashkelon*, of *Dmit'iw*, of Mutî-ilu, of Jerusalem, of Alhanu, of *ʾIysipi*,
> Their strongmen, their messengers, their confederates, their allies, the tribesmen of Asia, who will rebel, who will plot, who will fight, who will say that they will fight, who will say that they will rebel, in this entire land.[61]

Although differences are noted between the earlier and later groups, often suggesting that they reveal the development of sociopolitical circumstances in Canaan, it is difficult to know how reliable such assertions are within the relatively short period of time covered by the texts. Furthermore, many of these discussions interpret these rulers as tribal rulers, though they often simplistically and erroneously equate this social structure with a political and economic regime that sees tribes as synonymous with pastoral-nomadic identity, and pastoral nomads as the primary inhabitants of the southern Levant – a classic tautology. What is significant, however, is that the Execration Texts provide a significant anchor in the identification of toponymns in Canaan and they provide the earliest basis for the identification of Canaan's inhabitants with any certainty, and this identity is linguistically Amorite.

[56] Vercoutter 1963.
[57] Sethe 1926.
[58] Poyener 1940.
[59] Seidlmayer 2001: 488.
[60] Redford 1992a: 89; contra Ben-Tor 2006.
[61] Ritner 1997: 51–52.

The linguistic affiliation of the names of nearly all of the Asiatic rulers in the Execration Texts are almost universally agreed to be Amorite, though few Assyriologists have incorporated this corpus of data into their discussions of Amorite identity. The challenge, of course, is that the names are written in Egyptian and raise the problem of identifying foreign names in one language with a linguistic group in another region. However, the names also include linguistic elements, such as theophoric elements, typical of Amorite names in Mesopotamia and, significantly, none of the names appear to be Hurrian,[62] the only other possible identity that might be suggested. While references to Nubians are prevalent in the execration genre, because of Egypt's extension of imperial efforts to its south, references to Asiatics with linguistically Amorite names in these texts also reveal the military context for violent encounters that at least partly explains the negative sentiments of Egyptian soldiers toward Asiatic rulers from particular communities in the southern Levant. This is something about which they could hardly have cared except that their personal experiences abroad with the Egyptian military provided a context for their familiarity with these foreigners and the formulation of these sentiments.

That the Execration Texts yield both toponyms for Levantine settlements and the personal names of many of the rulers of these settlements is fortuitous. Together they provide insights concerning both the sentiments of Egyptian soldiers toward Asiatic communities in Canaan and the political geography of the region. These texts clearly did not exist in a vacuum and their discovery from Saqqara to Nubia is suggestive of intensive contacts between members of the Egyptian military and the populations of urban centers in the southern Levant during the early MBA. Consequently, they reveal an awareness of personal names and toponyms that stem from military and administrative contexts. They do not likely reflect economic activity, however, and certainly not interactions with pastoralist or nomadic populations, as neither can be assumed from the generic Egyptian terminology used to identify these rulers.

It is this context in which the evidence associated with the foundation of Avaris, the primary port-of-entry into Egypt from the reign Amenemhet I (1991–1962 BC), must be discussed. Located on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile at Tell ed-Dabʿa, Avaris was known as *Hwt-Imn-m-ḫȝt-mȝʿ-rw-nt-Rȝ-wȝty*, "the royal settlement of Amenemhet, justified, of 'The-door-of-the-Two-Roads.'"[63] The earliest settlement at Avaris appears to have been along the southern bank of this part of the river.[64] The archaeological remains from this period were unearthed in the northern area of Ezbet Rushdi,[65] which included a MK temple, and in Area F/I in the west, where a carefully planned

[62] Rainey and Notley 2006: 52.
[63] After translation in Bietak, 1996: 19; see also Czerny 2001.
[64] Bietak 1996: 5.

settlement was exposed that resembles the later MK pyramid town of Kahun. Thus, in its earliest incarnation, given its location and the historical context for its emergence, it seems likely that Avaris was founded as a military settlement, serving as a gateway for eastward deployments, both by sea and land, under the auspices of the Pharaonic army. It was also likely the primary entry-point for captives, merchants, and refugees coming from southwest Asia.

The achievements of an Egyptian military presence in the Levant are assumed as the historical backdrop of the MK *Tale of Sinuhe*. At the beginning Sinuhe is described as "The Prince, Count, Governor of the domain of the sovereign in the lands of the Asiatics."[66] Sinuhe's familiarity with Retenu – an Egyptian term for part of the Levant – and its customs is subsequently clear in the story, and a number of Asiatics are said to be able to speak Egyptian with Sinuhe. While this is a piece of literature, to imply such a familiarity with the region would be difficult to explain in the absence of relatively intense and protracted interactions beyond those typically associated with merchants within a few urban centers. Added to these references is the evidence for Asiatic captives and booty from Egyptian exploits, as preserved in the Mit Rahina inscription from the reign of Amenemhet II.[67] Likewise, references to the existence of the "Walls of the Ruler," a chain of fortresses stretching along the main road through the northern Sinai, can be viewed as elements of an active military and mercantile road. In *Sinuhe* they are said to be intended "to repel the Asiatics and to crush the Sand-farers."[68] Such fortresses not only provided oversight and administration of traffic to Egypt on this road, but served, perhaps more importantly, to support and supply military campaigns into southern Canaan.

In a somewhat ironic twist, Egyptian military activity in the Levant actually appears to have contributed to a further influx of Asiatics into Egypt early in the second millennium.[69] While references to the taking of Asiatic war captives during the MK are limited, the evidence for their presence in Egypt during this period is hardly minimal and includes a considerable number of names in MK texts.[70] More than 1,600 Asiatics, for example, were brought back by Amenemhet II from what appears to have been a single raid in the central Levant.[71] Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 also records a number of Asiatics serving as slaves in one Egyptian household during the reign of Amenemhet III until that of Sebekhotep III, between 1843 and 1747 BC.[72] Forty-five of seventy-

[65] Czerny 2015.
[66] Lichtheim 1997b: 77.
[67] Marcus 2007.
[68] Lichtheim 1997b: 77–78.
[69] Larkman 2007.
[70] Schneider 2003: 5–81; Luft 1993; Petrik 2011.
[71] See Marcus 2007: 157, and bibliography therein.

nine individuals mentioned in the Brooklyn Papyrus bear Northwest Semitic names and are designated Asiatics. Among such collections of names, it is important to keep in mind that outside of Amorite and Akkadian, no other Semitic languages in the early second millennium are associated with the Levant's inhabitants. While the term *ꜥꜣmw* likely included Southwest Asian populations and included some non-Amorite Asiatics, perhaps Hurrians, they appear to be invisible in nearly every respect, making it unlikely that they constituted substantive communities in Egypt during the MK, which is in line with the invisibility of Hurrians in the Levant until the late MBA.[73]

Although at this stage it is difficult to undertake additional subdivisions of the *ꜥꜣmw* as a group, subgroups of Asiatics could be sought among a wide range of terms associated with the Levant, its geography, and its inhabitants, although this has only been addressed to a limited extent to date.[74] Still, subgroups of Asiatics should be sought in Egypt, as a reflection of the makeup of communities in southwest Asia, which the *ꜥꜣmw* encompassed. Consequently, even if we cannot be unequivocally sure that all Northwest Semitic names for Asiatics are Amorite, there is neither evidence that they are Akkadian nor that they reflect any other, unidentified and unclassified but yet significant Northwest Semitic language in the Levant. Instead, the preponderance of evidence suggests that these names are, indeed, Northwest Semitic, and that, while they are rendered in Egyptian, a number of them have excellent comparisons with known Amorite names.[75] In addition, theophoric elements among these names include Shamash, 'Anat, and Ba'al,[76] divine names quite at home in the Levant among Amorite names during the MBA.

Concerning the occupations held by Asiatics in Egypt, it is remarkable that backbreaking work appears to have been reserved for Egyptian prisoners who make up the remaining non-Asiatic individuals listed in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446, for example, while Asiatics occupied positions of skilled labor, notably including textile production as weavers. It is also noteworthy that all of the Asiatic children listed bear Egyptian names, suggesting that the real forces of social integration were at work, namely intermarriage with Egyptian women. The skilled Asiatic slaves recorded in this document were likely captives from MK campaigns, which are seen to play a greater role in Egyptian and Levantine relations than previously considered. Although there is no reason to believe that MK military activity was as frequent, intense, or on a scale comparable with that of the New Kingdom – when campaigns were veritably

[72] Hayes 1955.
[73] See Dever 1998.
[74] For a recent study of the term *St.t,* see Mourad 2017.
[75] Albright 1954.
[76] Ritner 2002.

annual events – MK campaigns provide a significant context for identifying them as a major vector by which Asiatics were introduced into Egyptian society in the early second millennium.

It may be unsurprising, then, that MK literature preserves a strong polemic against Asiatics, as Mesopotamian literature did against Amorites. *The Prophecies of Neferti*, for example, illustrates what appear to be nothing less than the sentiments of Egyptian elites against a state of seemingly unchecked immigration that was very likely characteristic of the late third millennium and may have persisted into the early MK. Although recently some have taken to dismissing nearly all of the value of this genre for providing insights into social contexts during the late third to early second millennium BC in Egypt, this reaction is extreme. While this literature certainly engages in generalizations, in doing so it actually reveals a policy-shaping perspective among Egyptian elites regarding the presence of Asiatics during the MK. We must acknowledge that such views could exist alongside more temperate views in Egyptian society. Thus, the sentiments embodied in this genre are worth considering prior to a review of the military actions taken by early MK pharaohs.

> A strange bird will breed in the Delta marsh,
> Having made its nest beside the people,
> The people having let it approach by default.
> Then perish those delightful things,
> The fishponds full of fish-eaters,
> Teeming with fish and fowl.
> All happiness has vanished,
> The land is bowed down in distress,
> Owing to those feeders,
> Asiatics who roam the land.
> Foes have risen in the East,
> Asiatics have come down to Egypt.
> If the fortresses [crowded].
> . . .
> Desert flocks will drink at the river of Egypt,
> Take their ease on the shores for lack of one to fear;
> For this land is to and fro, knowing not what comes,
> What-will-be being hidden according as one says:
> "When sight and hearing fail the mute leads."
> I show you the land in turmoil,
> What should not be has come to pass.
> Men will seize weapons of warfare,
> The land will live in uproar.
> Men will make arrows of copper,
> Will crave blood for bread,
> Will laugh aloud at distress.
> None will weep over death,
> None will wake fasting for death,
> Each man's heart is for himself.
> Mourning is not done today,

> Hearts have quite abandoned it.
> A man sits with his back turned,
> While one slays another. I show you the sun as enemy, the brother as foe,
> A man slaying his father.[77]

In this text, Asiatics are likened to a "strange bird," an uninvited guest, having "made its nest" in the Delta, conveying the perception that Asiatics were more than temporary guests, not restricted to seasonal nomads or caravan merchants without proper residences in Egypt. The suggestion, however, and to whatever extent it may be an accurate reflection of circumstances, was that efforts during the FIP had limited effect in stopping these incursions. Therefore, the produce of Egypt that is identified with "fish ponds," had been consumed by Asiatics "come down to Egypt." As often is the case with prophecies in antiquity, the policy to be implemented by the future king was also made clear.

> Asiatics will fall to his sword,
> Libyans will fall to his flame,
> Rebels to his wrath, traitors to his might.
> As the serpent on his brow subdues the rebels for him.
> One will build the Walls-of-the-Ruler,
> To bar Asiatics from entering Egypt;
> They shall beg water as supplicants,
> So as to let their cattle drink.
> Then Order will return to its seat,
> While Chaos is driven away.[78]

The implications of this tradition are fairly self-evident. Asiatics were seen as a threat to the stability and security of Egypt, and preparations were to be made to repel them. They were a force of chaos and needed to be checked. One of the means of doing so is identified as the "Walls of the Ruler," which is a reference to what was likely a chain of fortresses along the northern Sinai operating throughout the MK.

In this context, another piece of literature, suggested to be from the reign of Senwosret I but preserved in an Eighteenth Dynasty copy, includes similar sentiments. *The Instruction of King Amenemhet I for his son Senwosret I* places the expression, "I made the Asiatics do the dog walk," in the mouth of Amenemhet I, Senwosret's father.[79] Asiatics were also specifically vilified for their status as opportunistic brigands and mercenaries, as illustrated in *The Wisdom of Merikare*.

> Lo, the miserable Asiatic,
> He is wretched because of the place he's in:
> Short of water, bare of wood,

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[77] *AEL* 1, pp. 141–42.
[78] *AEL* 1, p. 143.
[79] *COS*, p. 67.

> Its paths are many and painful because of mountains.
> He does not dwell in once place,
> Food propels his legs,
> He fights since the time of Horus,
> Not conquering nor being conquered,
> He does not announce the day of combat,
> Like a thief who darts about a group.
>
> But as I live and shall be what I am,
> When the Bowmen were a sealed wall,
> I breached [their strongholds],
> I made Lower Egypt attack them,
> I captured their inhabitants,
> I seized their cattle,
> Until the Asiatics abhorred Egypt.
> Do not concern yourself with him,
> The Asiatic is a crocodile on its shore,
> It snatches from a lonely road,
> It cannot seize from a populous town.[80]

While the date of the preserved copies of the text belong to the late Eighteenth Dynasty and therefore represent a pseudepigraphic work set in the Ninth or Tenth Dynasty (2165–2040 BC), it is also generally agreed to pre-date the Eighteenth Dynasty and thus was likely written during the MK.

If the characterization of Asiatics as he who "fights since the time of Horus" and is neither "conquering nor being conquered" is not itself an allusion to Asiatic mercenaries in Egypt, that the memory of such mercenaries was also alive and well during the MK is echoed in *The Admonitions of Ipuwer*:

> How then does every man kill his brother? The troops we raised for ourselves have become Bowmen bent on destroying! What has come from it is to let the Asiatics know the state of the land.[81]

Despite the undeniable rhetorical style and hyperbole employed throughout this piece of literature,[82] that such a statement concerning Asiatics, who are nowhere earlier mentioned directly, was reserved for the end is suggestive of one of the primary functions of this piece: implicating Asiatics, especially mercenaries among them, in Egypt's problems at the start of the MK.

The polemics against Asiatics in these MK sources are, however, significantly contrasted with many of Sinuhe's encounters with Asiatics in *The Tale of Sinuhe*.[83] During an early stage of his flight, Sinuhe describes aid provided to him in the northern Sinai by an Asiatic leader who is said to have recognized Sinuhe and then conducted him with his tribe into the Levant. His travels led

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[80] Lichtheim 1997a: 64.
[81] *AEL* 1, p. 161.
[82] Hassan 2007.
[83] Lichtheim 1997b.

him to Byblos and Qedem, and eventually placed him in the court of one "Ammunenshi, the ruler of Upper Retenu." There, evidently, even "the language of Egypt" was spoken, and he married this ruler's oldest daughter and established himself in a "land called Yaa," on which a description is spent concerning its various products. Time passed as he entertained Egyptian palace officials "who came north or went south" and as he served on "numerous missions as commander" of Ammunenshi's fighters, in a capacity of professional soldier. This appears to have also contributed to his personal travails, resulting in a challenge from a "hero of Retenu" who was thereafter dispatched by Sinuhe's arrows and battle ax in single combat. Eventually, Sinuhe was summoned home by the pharaoh. The story is often invoked for its commentary on Asiatic, usually Amorite, life in the Levant during the early MBA.[84] However, more striking are the social interactions with Asiatics that this MK tale invokes, ranging from hospitality and intermarriage to hostility and violence. To whatever extent one might regard the story as fact or fiction, its social context is evocative of the range of interactions that appear to have existed between Egyptians and Asiatics during the early MBA.

How then are we to understand the presence of Amorites in Egypt at the start of the MK, and to explain the origins of such polemics against Asiatics? The clearest analogs are to the sentiments of inhabitants of a region who, during periods of political and economic stress as during the end of the FIP and early MK, foster increasingly negative views of the foreigners among them, despite the lower social standing and clear dependence of these sojourners upon their hosts. These foreigners were viewed as competitors for limited resources and power, if not a clear and present danger to stability, as mercenaries and armed factions might pose. This perspective surfaces in the preceding texts where Asiatics are consistently portrayed as needy and landless, requiring water and pastureland for their cattle, and pursuing violence, whether raiding along roads "snatching" their prey or offering themselves into professional military service, even fighting among themselves. While these characterizations may seem analogous to Mesopotamian characterizations of Amorites in OB compositions, the audience is entirely different. Most of these literary pieces are royal constructions, reflecting official policy with respect to Asiatics and southwest Asia. It may be unsurprising, then, that the period from Amenemhet I to Amenemhet II (1991–1895 BC) saw the clearest evidence for military activity against southern Levantine communities in this period and, furthermore, that this is most appropriately characterized as raiding rather than imperial campaigning.

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[84] Rainey 1972; Rainey 2006.

While government and military service were clear paths, albeit gradual, toward the establishment of Amorite hegemony during the twentieth century BC, by the late twentieth and early nineteenth centuries Amorite dynasties are attested throughout Mesopotamia. Larsa, Babylon, and Uruk as well as lesser-known states such as Me-Turran, gradually came under Amorite rule, to be followed by Mari and even Assur. This was also paralleled in the Levant, when states such as Byblos and Ashkelon are first identified under Amorite rule in the late twentieth century BC among the Execration Texts.

During this early stage in the political ascendance of Amorites they employed Akkadian hegemonic prototypes in their legitimation. This meant that at any given moment in the decades and centuries to follow most of these rulers set their sights on expanding their hegemony beyond the boundaries of their city-states. Despite the fact that such grand ambitions never appear to have come to fruition in the early second millennium, the Akkadian imperial narrative remained a compelling element of elite ideology and legitimation from the early second millennium. The reopening of the zone of uncertainty to intensive pastoralism around 1900 BC only furthered the pace and intensity of the ambitions of nascent Amorite rulers, who made individual claims on parts of this territory throughout the centuries to follow. Inasmuch as Amorite rulers succeeded in their efforts to legitimate themselves, their efforts were overwhelmingly directed at maintaining power while satisfying local traditions and addressing the concerns of their communities. Consequently, these efforts were not uniquely Amorite and local customs were often pressed into service to legitimate Amorite rule. This process required the perpetuation of traditions, especially the maintenance of local cults, including their temples and rites, but also the creation and maintenance of social order, writ large in a proliferation of legal traditions. These social obligations had an entangling effect on the identity of Amorite elites during this period, which is especially well reflected in the lengthy and ever-expanding epithets of OB kings and the trappings of Amorites living in the eastern Nile Delta.

The Foundation of Amorite States in the Northern Levant

While the rough outlines of the rise of Amorite power are evident for southern Mesopotamia, for northern Mesopotamia and the Levant, where sources for this period are scant, the evidence for this process is accessed largely by proxy. In the northern Levant, albeit with more limited evidence, Amorite dynasties emerged among a number of traditional centers (Figure 4.1).[85] While Ebla

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[85] Klengel 1992: 39–43.

would eventually come under the rule of Yamḫad with its capital at Ḫalab (Aleppo), we are aware of Ebla's rule by Amorites in this period from an inscription of Ibbit-Lim, son of Igrish-Hepa,[86] even if uncertainty exists about the exact date of his reign.[87] Furthermore, references in the Kanesh OA corpus to Ebla merchants and no references to Yamḫad or Ḫalab suggest that this center persisted in its dominance of the northern Levantine interior during the twentieth century BC. After that, the Mari letters reveal that Yamḫad eclipsed Ebla, which it then ruled. From Ugarit we are familiar with the dynasty's Amorite founder, Yaqarum, who stood at the head of a list of no fewer than twenty-six kings.[88] In this context, *The Legend of Keret* has been identified by some as a distant cultural memory of its Amorite foundation.[89] An even broader argument, much of which echoes the discussion in this work, has recently been made concerning the various ways in which Ugarit's dynasty may be identified as Amorite.[90] By the time of the Mari archives, there is no doubt of its Amorite connections and its firm integration into the social world of Amorite tribes.[91] Whether or not we can be certain of the date, character, or actual affiliation of its early second-millennium foundation, there is little doubt that its past as Amorite, real or imagined, was fully embraced during the Late Bronze Age.

Byblos, like Ugarit, lacks firm data for its dynastic origins as Amorite, although it too is mentioned among the Execration Texts, where both the "Asiatics of Byblos" and "the clans of Byblos" are identified. Although no rulers of Byblos are specifically named in the Execration Texts, synchronisms of its list of known rulers, who do bear Amorite names, with late MK pharaohs and with kings of Mari establish that by the end of the MK an Amorite dynasty was in place at Byblos.[92] Among the earliest attested is Abishemu I, a contemporary of Amenemhet III (1843–1797 BC), illustrating that by no later than the end of the nineteenth century an Amorite dynasty was in place at Byblos.

While the soldiers or administrators who commissioned the Execration Texts may not necessarily have been familiar with the names of the Levantine rulers mentioned, as much as they may have been familiar with the places referenced, the association of personal names with specific locations likely reflects scribal familiarity with the political geography of Egypt's neighbors, as was certainly the case during the New Kingdom.[93] These texts, as

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[86] Gelb 1984: 187.
[87] Klengel 1992: 41.
[88] RS 24257. Singer 1999: 609–11.
[89] Margalit 1999: 226.
[90] Buck 2020.
[91] Singer 1999: 616–19.
[92] Kitchen 1967.
[93] See Allen 2002.

noted earlier, reveal the affiliations of Levantine rulers with Amorite groups by means of their Amorite linguistic association. Among the well-known places mentioned in these texts, which are thus identified as towns ruled by Amorites during the early MBA, are Ullaza, Byblos, and Ashkelon,[94] to name a few of the more prominent sites (Figure 4.4). But they likewise include venues in the northern Levant such as Arqa (ʿIrqatum). Among the slightly later texts also appear a larger number of sites, including Shechem, Achsaph, Rehov, Arqa, Beth-Shemesh, Jerusalem, Damascus (ʾApum), Laish (Tel Dan), and Hazor, potentially suggesting the emergence of these polities at a moment slightly later than the late nineteenth century, although several of them also feature ceramic evidence for settlement from even earlier stages of the MBA (i.e., before ca. 1900 BC).[95] If correct, then the foundations of some of these later-attested towns followed as much as a century after the initial reestablishment of maritime harbors, such as Byblos, and the establishment of others, such as Ashkelon, which connected Egypt by sea with the entire Levantine coast. Early MBA ceramics from Hazor, for example, are assigned to the final phase of the MB I (1850–1800 BC).[96] Needless to say, the process in the Levant follows a similar timeline and trajectory for the appearance of Amorite rule in Mesopotamia during the late twentieth century and into the early nineteenth.

Although our sources remain limited, rulers during the first two centuries following the fall of Ur reveal varied levels of interest in making their Amorite affiliations explicit. To the extent that they did, this usually involved identification with an Amorite tribe. However we reconstruct increasing Amorite hegemony in the early second millennium, Amorites were key beneficiaries of the fall of the Ur III state, particularly after Isin could no longer maintain its status as heir to Ur. The expansion of Amorite states would, however, only reach its peak in the eighteenth century BC with states from Babylon to Assyria as well as Mari in the east and Yamḫad, Qatna, Ugarit, Byblos, Hazor, and Ashkelon in the west. At that time Amorite rulers are even attested at a number of lesser-known polities in Mesopotamia, such as Mananā and Me-Turran, with still others ruling unidentified Mesopotamian principalities.[97]

The Re-extensification of Agropastoralism

Concomitant with the rise of Amorite kingship around the start of the nineteenth century BC, a wide expanse of marginal land was once again

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[94] Rainey and Notley 2006: 52–53, 58.
[95] Cohen 2002.
[96] Ibid.: 82.
[97] See *RIME* 4.0.

available for agropastoral exploitation,[98] compelling neighboring rulers to compete for access and control of this revitalized landscape. From the rule of Gungunum of Larsa, who asserted Larsa's independence from Isin, conditions were set for increasing rivalries among Mesopotamia's polities. At approximately the same time amelioration of the arid conditions that had prevailed across the zone of uncertainty since ca. 2200 BC in the north, across the Jazira and the eastern margins of the Levant, created opportunities for the renewed expansion of rainfed agropastoralism. This evidently contributed to a return of mobile pastoralism throughout this reopened frontier.

By the time of the Mari letters, pastoralism was strongly correlated with the subsistence of many Amorite tribes in Mari's hinterlands,[99] and there is no question that the textile industry played an important role in the economic vitality of Amorite states in the Levant and northern Mesopotamia. The economic opportunity created by the reopening of this frontier added economic independence to the political independence that had prevailed since the fall of Ur. Yet the revitalization of pastoralism during the early MBA can be viewed more broadly within the framework of the extensification of land use that was associated with Amorite polities across the region. Re-entry into the Jazira and exploitation of the Bishri region for pastoralism are examples of such extensification of land use, which was likely only possible because of increased humidity as arid conditions abated, ca. 1900 BC. Zones in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant that had been suboptimal for agriculture and pastoralism since ca. 2200 BC saw, therefore, a return of former conditions. This permitted a reopening of this frontier, if with an emphasis now on mobile pastoralism and a more limited, tentative, role for agriculture, which speaks to the uncertainties inherent in these early endeavors.

In a very real sense, the revival of environmental conditions across the zone of uncertainty set the stage for a veritable "land rush," conjuring scenes of homesteaders and ranchers moving west as in the United States during the nineteenth century AD. However, the agents behind this MBA land rush were tribes and kingdoms vying for access to and control of pastureland. Consequently, it is of little surprise that the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries BC constituted a period of considerable political volatility in this region, as revealed in the archives of Mari, Shubat Enlil, and Shemshara.[100] Indeed, the most clearly articulated land grab was that of Shamshi-Adad of Assur, who in the late nineteenth century BC boldly established a new foothold in the region at the former site of the capital of Shekhna, now renamed Shubat Enlil, which

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[98] Weiss 2014: 376–77; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 309–11.
[99] Luke 1965.
[100] Ristvet and Weiss 2011: xlii.

has been identified consequently as a "disembedded capital."[101] The conflict between the kings of Mari and Assur, however, may have predated the rivalry recorded in the Mari letters by at least a generation, as it seems that Shamshi-Adad's father, Ila-kabkabu, had warred with Yaḫdun-Lim's father, Iaggid-Lim.[102]

Eventually establishing his son, Yasmaḫ-Addu, on the throne of Mari to the south, Shamshi-Adad created a principality, which for lack of an explicit name has been identified as the "kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia."[103] Yaḫdun-Lim had resisted this land grab and on one occasion even "set on fire the harvest of the land of Shamshi-Addu," which was significant enough to warrant the naming of a year, the second such burning he records and the only events like these recorded among any year names known to date. He likewise records another year name as: "Year in which Yaḫdun-Lim was victorious against the army of Shamshi-Addu at the gate of Nagar."[104]

The archives of Mari play an instrumental role in articulating the economic, political, and military dynamics at work in this region from approximately 1800 to 1750 BC, ending with Hammurapi's destruction of the city when this archive was closed. What this archive and the limits of our sources do not clarify, however, is the transition between Shakkanakku rule and the establishment of Amorite rule, just as the Jazira once again reopened. While undoubtedly the process was a gradual one and may have mirrored conditions nearly six hundred years earlier, when neighboring states like Ebla and Mari held major economic stakes among agropastoral communities that were established throughout the zone of uncertainty, we are dependent on archaeological data to reconstruct this process during the early MBA. During the early second millennium very few villages and towns dotted the landscape when compared to the third-millennium settlement pattern.[105] Consequently, while this landscape did feature some settlement, its primary appeal was for pastoralism.

In the context of the reemergence and growth of settlement within this marginal zone after 1900 BC, one phenomenon to be addressed is the construction of so-called hollow cities. This term has been applied to the massive ramparted sites of the Jazira, such as Shubat Enlil (Tell Leilan), that are enclosed by earthen ramparts and walls but appear to encircle large, mostly unsettled areas. These have created a certain amount of speculation concerning the function of these settlements, particularly at capitals such as Mari, Shubat Enlil, Qatna, and regional centers such as Ebla and Qattara (Tell al-Rimah).

[101]   Ristvet 2012: 43.
[102]   *RIME* 4.6.7.
[103]   Ristvet and Weiss 2011.
[104]   https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yearnames/html/T18K1.htm.
[105]   Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 296–97.

It has been noted that many of these towns reveal limited evidence of domestic habitation while featuring the construction of massive earthen ramparts, temples, and administrative complexes.[106]

In light of renewed exploitation of marginal lands in the decades following 1900 BC, a new interpretation can be offered concerning the settlement landscape, one in which "hollow cities" were a byproduct of a process of renewed extensification of pastoralism across the region and some experimentation, with the reestablishment of settlement in the region. While urban centers experienced a resurgence, as exemplified by monumental construction, in a situation that was reminiscent of the third millennium BC, these political and economic centers were not themselves the locus of the activities that were key to their growth. Rather, the locus of this activity was, once again, the revival of a pastoralist economy centered on the exploitation of marginal pasturelands, much of which was at some distance from these centers. In line with the settlement evidence available for the late third millennium, the home towns of these pastoralists remained the small, largely unexplored, ephemeral settlements of the early MBA, and not large, emerging cities. However, in difference to the multi-century process that was witnessed in the third millennium, this activity, I suggest, emerged relatively quickly as a new resource, if initially of uncertain reliability. For this reason it grew tentatively over the course of the nineteenth century BC and never resulted in a proliferation of settlements. On the one hand, exploitation of this marginal zone depended on evidence that their pasturelands were the product of consistent and reliable rainfall, as proof that such conditions were not anomalous and could be built upon economically. On the other hand, the enterprise eventually required the political and military backing of polities with which pastoralist groups were affiliated, from along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, such as Ekallatum and Mari, as well as more distant polities like Yamḫad and Qatna. The cautious nature of this encroachment arguably led to an entirely different character of regional settlement, namely more limited evidence for towns, villages, and farmsteads throughout this marginal region during this period.[107]

As the Mari letters reveal, pastoralist activity became the domain of groups identified principally by their tribal affiliations, and only secondarily by their affiliations with particular polities. Their affiliations with settled communities therefore grew tenuous as various Amorite tribes increasingly asserted themselves as the arbiters of this economic activity and sought military and political action to protect it. The reemergence of pastoralist communities was in many ways analogous, therefore, to the process during the third millennium, recalling the protracted duration of settlement expansion that took most of

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[106] Morandi Bonacossi 2014a: 422–23.
[107] For example, see Ur 2010: 110, 57–58.

the first half of the third millennium to be fully realized. During the early second millennium, it now took place under environmental and political conditions not yet unequivocally favorable to intensive settlement. Within this framework, Shamshi-Adad's construction of Shubat Enlil (Tell Leilan) is thus brought into sharper focus, as the staking of a claim on a region that had only relatively recently begun to be intensively exploited again after centuries of limited pastoral activity. Consequently, the nineteenth century BC emerges as a volatile period during which pastoralists and various rulers from surrounding lands mobilized as they sought to establish their claims over portions of the Jazira for pasturage. The roughly contemporaneous establishment of Amorite dynasties throughout Mesopotamia only further encouraged competition for control of this region. While the limited textual sources for this period do not permit an articulation of the detailed mechanics of this process, comparison with the situation during the third millennium reveals that the reopening of new territories for the expansion of pastoralism constituted a fundamental expansion of the textile industry during the nineteenth century BC and with it an expansion of the long-distance exchange of textiles.

Akkad, Scribalism, and Royal Legitimation

Inasmuch as Ur III traditions and styles offered familiar and visible continuity between the rule of Isin and Ur during the twentieth century BC, Ur itself appears to have remained a reference point for legitimation for perhaps as little as a century after its decline. Once Isin could no longer maintain its supremacy, Amorite elites at Larsa and those of other Babylonian dynasties appear to have shifted their focus to Akkadian traditions, particularly those associated with Sargon and Naram-Sin, as a template for royal legitimation.[108] This is, however, unsurprising since Ur III literature, too, had engaged Akkad's kings in a commentary on kingship and legitimacy that employed literature such as *The Curse of Akkad*, *The Sumerian Sargon Legend*, and the earliest version of the Sumerian King List.[109] However, it is arguable that by reaching back to pre-Ur III times, Akkadian traditions could be more easily manipulated to render a framework for identifying the ideals and limits of kingship.

While the most immediate precursors of these OB traditions can certainly be found in the Ur III, a broader argument can be made that typical OB styles that emerged from the early second millennium onward drew predominantly on a stream of tradition that, while incorporating Ur III styles and customs, fundamentally saw itself as referencing an Akkadian past.[110] As part of this imagined

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[108] Franke 1995.
[109] Cooper 1993; Steinkeller 2003.
[110] This appears to be true even of the Akkadian contest scenes on seals; see Collon 1987: 45.

past a single king ruled the "the four corners" of the world, as Sargon claimed. That the value of Ur III traditions was fading by around 1900 BC is suggested by shifts even in royal naming conventions. No further efforts were made to name kings after Ur's rulers, while among Assur's early kings, for example, the names Sargon and Naram-Sin are attested. Naram-Sin was also the name of one of Eshnunna's early kings. Likewise, although veneration of deified kings had included Ur III rulers shortly after the fall of Ur, veneration of Akkadian kings, which began in the Ur III, persisted throughout the OB Period. Sargon, for example, is known to have been venerated at Mari in the latter part of MBA during the reign of Shamshi-Adad.[111] Shamshi-Adad also claimed to have even curated inscriptions of the Akkadian king Manishtushu in Assur.[112]

Akkadian legends associated with the kings of Akkad, as attributed to Sargon and Naram-Sin, were also important in defining the ideals of kingship in the early MBA.[113] Among OA traditions from Kanesh we possess OA tales of Sargon and his conquests.[114] The importance of Sargonic traditions at the start of the MBA is, however, further evidenced by the occurrence among the OA rulers of the names of Sargon (I) in the twentieth century BC and his grandson, Naram-Sin (son of Puzur-Assur II) in the nineteenth century BC.[115] Although Sargon's name would become legendary even during the OB Period, it does not otherwise seem to have been appropriated for rulers during this period, despite the evident importance of Sargon as an archetypal figure early in the second millennium BC. At least four primary traditions are associated with Sargon and five associated with his grandson, Naram-Sin. Of the twenty manuscripts associated with these traditions through the end of the OB Period (predominantly between 1800 and 1700 BC), only one, a scribal exercise employing the text of *The Great Revolt against Naram-Sin*, originated during the Akkadian Period, and none are from the Ur III.[116] These observations alone reveal that Akkadian-inspired traditions, along with those of the Ur III (as will be discussed), were revived, expanded, and documented during the MBA. Given the limits of Mesopotamian epic as a genre, which also includes the major traditions of *Gilgamesh* and a few Sumerian texts as will be discussed, the significance of Akkadian legends during this period must be singled out.

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[111] Villard 1995: 874.
[112] *RIMA* 1.0.39.2.
[113] J. Westenholz observes that these deeds "were telescoped and assigned to the two most prominent of" Akkad's kings (Westenholz 1997: 3).
[114] Alster and Oshima 2007.
[115] Larsen 2015: 93–94.
[116] Thirty-one manuscripts in total are known for these legends through the Neo-Assyrian Period (Westenholz 2009; Westenholz 1997). OB texts come from Babylon, Ur, Nippur, Shaduppum, Larsa, Sippar, and Mari. One example is known from the destruction of Level II at Kanesh-Kültepe (Dercksen 2005).

While little can be definitively stated concerning the historicity of most of the legends that emerged around the celebrated figures of Sargon and Naram-Sin, several important themes pervade the literary versions of these epics, which played an important role in MBA society and its understandings of kingship. A dominant theme was the king as warrior, but also that of the king as first among equals, that is, among his warriors.[117] Throughout these texts, populations and places once under the Akkadian Empire are mentioned, including Amurrum, Tidnum/Didanum, Subartu, Carchemish, and Simurrum,[118] the first two of which are expressly associated with Amorite identity. Geographic markers of the extreme range of Akkadian conquests, including the Amanus and "Cedar Mountains" also appear. One of the most extensive legends emerges around the events of the *Great Revolt against Naram-Sin*.[119] Its less legendary status might be supported by the antiquity of the earliest manuscript, which dates to the Akkadian Period. Nevertheless, reconquest of the "whole world" by Naram-Sin, "king of the four quarters of the world," is the fundamental achievement lauded. It may be argued that inasmuch as the original conquests by Sargon established an archetype for the military aspirations of OB kings, Naram-Sin's successful counter-insurgency served as a model for efforts to retain territorial conquests, and to claim such a title.

Sargon was therefore hailed as the paradigmatic figure of the "king of battle."[120] The achievements of Akkadian kings, as such, are also underscored outside of traditional literary genres, as among the omens that grew up around these during the MBA, and persisted through the Iron Age. These center on Sargon's achievements and begin with the expression "This is an omen of Sargon, who . . . " and include variants such as "ran through the dark and saw a light," "subdued the world," and "knew no equal." Recognizing that the literary corpus featuring Sargon as king emerged in the OB Period, the very end of *Sargon, the Conquering Hero*, reveals how Sargon functioned as an archetypal ruler to kings of the early second millennium.

Sargon instructs the troops:

> "Lo, the king who wants to equal me,
> where I have gone,
> let him also go!"[121]

The message could hardly be clearer: Sargon, the warrior king, was the archetype of kingship to OB rulers.

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[117] Westenholz 1997: 57–101.
[118] Many other toponyms and gentilics are missing in the texts, e.g., ibid.: 74–75.
[119] Ibid.: 221–57.
[120] Jonker 1995: 59–64.
[121] Westenholz 1997: 57–77.

While Akkadian legends continued to be written down as late as the eighteenth century BC (see Chapter 5), this process likely began during the first centuries of the second millennium. Central to the formulation of the ideals of kingship as preserved in the legends was, therefore, the role of scribes and scribal schools, which were patronized by elite households. Although Akkadian and Sumerian literary traditions have been frequently investigated for the historical information that they are thought to provide for the Akkadian and Ur III empires, this approach has largely obscured the role that these literary but also oral traditions played among MBA communities.[122] Concerning the Ur III royal correspondence, Piotr Michalowski notes it

> was read with a considerable dose of hindsight in OB times, driven, if nothing else, by the very fact of its attribution to long-dead correspond- ents. The drama of the last days of Ur, however, known to latter-day readers from a variety of other poetic and mantic sources, provided a canvas for reflection and commentary on historical and epistolary ver- acity, the reliability of messages from the divine world, and finally, at the risk of considerable anachronism on my part, on the very nature of fiction and discourse.[123]

After all, the locus for the preservation of these traditions was overwhelmingly that of scribal schools scattered among Mesopotamian communities. To emphasize the role of scribalism in the preservation of these traditions, how- ever, would certainly be to neglect the fact that cuneiform record must be regarded as the tip of an iceberg of tradition that included what was likely an even more extensive oral tradition.[124] Similarly, even the cuneiform record we possess from the MBA is inordinately skewed to the production of texts, mostly preserved from the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, seemingly the result of an extensive list of destroyed cities that bespeak an age during which siege warfare was all too common. This is, after all, the principal reason such large corpora of OB texts exist. Nonetheless, in the context of the mobility of communities during the MBA, as documented earlier, the spread of these important traditions is unsurprising, and it should encourage us to reconsider the impact that these traditions had upon these communities, even where the texts are not preserved since they were part of a broader scribal training.

Despite the varied languages that were spoken among Near Eastern com- munities within which Amorites lived, the overarching scribal traditions were Mesopotamian. While the focus is often placed on the use of OB, emphasizing the evidence from Mari and Babylonia, it is more appropriate to identify the

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[122] See Ristvet 2014: 111–16.
[123] Michalowski 2011: 203.
[124] Westenholz 2009: 30–31.

shared scribal tradition adopted by these cultures as fundamentally Mesopotamian. The focus was on the employment of cuneiform writing with linguistic associations and adaptations to their constituencies and increasing regional variation over the course of the MBA, particularly evident in peripheral Akkadian traditions in the west.[125] Emphasis should be placed therefore on the relationship between scribal and literary traditions rather than the specific language employed in writing (or spoken within these communities since they need not be identical), where OB dominated but in which OA is also attested and Sumerian persisted in use as a literary language. As the loci of their preservation reveal, both rulers and elites but also possibly a wider swath of the citizenry of these MBA communities regarded these literary traditions as preserving a sense of the ideals of a successful kingship as well as expectations for these rulers. It is in this light that Akkadian and Sumerian literary traditions, which were preserved because of OB scribal schools, contributed to idealized notions of kingship, which were held widely across communities during the MBA, including but not restricted to Amorites.

It is easy to forget when reading Sumerian literature that its production along with Akkadian legends reached its zenith during the OB Period.[126] It was then that scribal schools organized in elite Mesopotamian households, and perhaps to a lesser extent Levantine and Anatolian urban centers, faithfully reproduced, embellished, expanded, and adapted Sumerian literary traditions. Indeed, the work of scribes during this period is largely responsible for the reception of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* by successive generations,[127] and similarly our familiarity with the laments for the destruction of different Mesopotamian cities, such as *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*. Numerous royal hymns for OB rulers were also composed in Sumerian during this period.[128] Together these texts reflect a scribal training as well as a cultural tradition with roots in southern Mesopotamia but that was spread across the Near East.

The fall of Ur assumed legendary status in scribal circles during the OB Period, enshrined in Sumerian literature such as the *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*.[129] While such literature is certainly questionable as a source for historical reconstructions, these laments reveal perceptions of the importance of southern Mesopotamian cities among the scribal schools of OB elites who sponsored them. Furthermore, this genre of literature underscores the perception that the fall of these cities was a foregone conclusion, resulting from the abandonment of sanctuaries by the gods, which appears front and center in these texts. They best serve, therefore, as some measure of ideological

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[125] Even Eshnunna's scribal and linguistic tradition is observed to have influenced that of Mari during its period of alliance; Charpin 2004: 140.
[126] On the location of scribal schools, see Michalowski 1995b: 2283.
[127] See George 2003.
[128] Michalowski 1995b: 2285.
[129] Samet 2014.

sentiments during the early second millennium regarding the reasons for the fall of Ur and the decline of its neighboring cities. Despite current understandings of this genre, it has been from such literature that previous conclusions have been drawn regarding the factors that brought about the decline of the Third Dynasty of Ur. References to attacks upon the city of Ur and its temples, characterized as a storm, resulting in a scene of death, destruction, and looting enshrined in postapocalyptic language has been too frequently at the center of discussions, as if it provided a direct witness to the actual events that befell Ur, despite direct implication of Elamites, Gutians, and Tidnum in Ur's collapse. It may be somewhat surprising, then, to encounter Ibbi-Sin's suggestion in one letter that, "even now Enlil has roused up the Amorites from the highlands to aid me."[130] However, this is really to be expected since Sumerian literature was actively preserved in the centuries immediately following the fall of Ur, during the reigns of rulers who had supplanted Ur's kings. It would be surprising if Amorites were cast in a uniquely negative light. In this genre, the fall of cities such as Ur is primarily attributed to divine will, as Ibbi-Sin's letter underscores. Thus, the genre provides Amorites with a central role in Ur's decline but with divine sanction, and thus, just as the Sumerian King List functioned, it might be understood to also legitimate Amorite rule.

During the MBA, scribes in different parts of Mesopotamian society were engaged in the production of these texts. They did so with the goal of instilling both a sense of unity and antiquity for emergent dynasties during the early second millennium BC.[131] The use of Sumerian for the production of certain types of texts, while no longer the lingua franca, permitted the appropriation of these traditions. While it is difficult to determine how far the effects of such traditions reached down the social ladder, they were certainly effective within the upper echelons of society, where a familiar corpus was appropriated by elites. Texts such as the Sumerian King List, as previously mentioned, were pivotal as political charters, connecting Isin's founders early in the second millennium to a legacy of ancient dynasties whose legitimacy was widely recognized. Likewise, Amorite rulers were presented as just kings for their role in the restoration of cities mentioned in city laments.[132]

Niek Veldhuis articulates the role that Sumerian played in the reinvention of tradition during the OB Period, namely through the recycling of older traditions. These traditions belong to one of three principal text groups: hymns, narratives, and paradigmatic (or so-called wisdom) texts. These, he notes, contributed to a Sumerian heritage intended to convey a notion of Babylonian unity.[133] He observes, though, that different "programs of truth"

[130] *CKU* 24, in Michalowski 2011: 464.
[131] Veldhuis 2004.
[132] Ibid.: 69.
[133] Ibid.: 66–67.

existed in the minds of Babylonians who could accept in literary and historical contexts certain elements of hymns and narratives as conveying truth, while in domestic or court contexts accepting another perhaps seemingly incompatible truth. Above all, Veldhuis clarifies that these texts preserve a fundamental historical witness to the Babylonians' "mode of historical truth."[134]

> Sumerian narrative texts and hymns do not represent fiction; they contain knowledge and reflect on the history of Babylonia. History is narrowly related to identity, it is the creation of a narrative that puts the present in the perspective of the past. Since by the OB Period Sumerian was an ancient language, those who dealt with this history were to be introduced to a kind of identity that was not available to other people. The 'invented tradition' that was created through the literary corpus was one of Babylonian unity; the underlying message being that the normative or even normal political organization of lower Mesopotamia was and had always been that of unity under one king. Though there are a few texts that directly express such a view of history, much more important is the indirect voice that speaks through the corpus in its entirety: the history of Uruk is our history, the history of Lagash is our history, too, and so are the histories of Ur, Isin, and Nippur. There is one Sumerian language, one Sumerian history, one Sumerian heritage.[135]

Such a textual corpus successfully wove together the archaic past, recent past, and present, as well as the sacred and the profane by reference to the gods, former rulers, and elements of mundane and everyday life.[136] Veldhuis' observation that, "The fiction that Babylonia was ruled as a unity by successive kings dictated that all earlier rulers were Sumerians and thus these rulers belong to a unified Sumerian history" goes a long way toward assisting us to understand the psychology of early Amorite kingship.[137]

The image of the king during the OB Period is well articulated in what may be suggested to be its primary literary (and no doubt oral) manifesto, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. This epic first took shape during this period, probably not later than ca. 1700 BC. Tzvi Abusch contends that the evidence available for the OB version reveals a "unified *Epic* about the hero Gilgamesh."[138] In Abusch's understanding, the early version reveals an "oral epic [that] focuses on family and the present," while the later Standard Babylonian version focuses "on community and the future."[139]

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[134] Ibid.: 74 One could argue that such a perspective might inform the seemingly strange interplay between the "truths" held dear to individuals during the Renaissance, wherein faith and science were at once viewed to be at odds by some, but not by others.
[135] Ibid.: 75–76.
[136] Ibid.: 69.
[137] Ibid.: 79.
[138] Abusch 2001: 614–18.
[139] Ibid.: 620.

Given its historical and political context, however, the epic is not only replete with symbolic commentary on the role of kingship as perceived in this period, as most will argue, but furthermore packed with commentary on what were likely perceived as the failings of "Sumerian kingship" (including Akkadian kings) without direct reference to Ur III, Akkadian, or specific third-millennium rulers aside from Gilgamesh. Instead, Gilgamesh, for whom a number of fragments of independent Sumerian traditions existed, became the subject of a first-ever Mesopotamian epic. As such, the epic does not deny the important or essential role of the king but serves as a commentary on the limits and humanness of that kingship, the futility of meaningless, far-flung military expeditions (i.e., the slaying of Humbaba), and the responsibilities and role of the king to his city. The work functionally highlights the urban building accomplishments of kings (i.e., Uruk), the fundamental need for allies (i.e., Enkidu), the detrimental nature of foreign adventures (i.e., Humbaba), and the limits of kingship (i.e., Gilgamesh's mortality, the ire of the city resulting from his conduct), among other more traditionally discussed themes associated with this epic.

Although *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is often assumed to reflect Sumerian kingship in the third millennium BC, this is principally because Gilgamesh first appears among several third-millennium Sumerian poems that were at least partly folded into the later epic. Nevertheless, the epic represents an Akkadian style of kingship informed by Akkadian exploits and legends as they were known – or as tradition knew them – to members of OB scribal society.[140] Unsurprisingly, therefore, exploits best attested for Akkadian kings feature prominently in the earliest epic. Gilgamesh's trip to the cedar mountains echoes the exploits of Sargon to the "Cedar Forest and the Silver Mountains," and his defeat of the foreign Humbaba appears as a caricature of Sargon's destruction of "walls as far as the shore of the sea," while ships from Dilmun – to which Gilgamesh sailed – "moored . . . at the quay of Agade."[141] The ignominious self-deification of Naram-Sin, the first of such kingly claims known to tradition, is likewise engaged in the epic in the semi-divine and flawed figure of Gilgamesh. Thus, the epic effectively constitutes a commentary on kingship, its glories and abuses, in the OB Period. It was likely already taking shape in the first two centuries of the second millennium and best reflects an idealized version of Akkadian kingship, rather than Sumerian kingship.

Although Amorites do not feature in the OB epic as reconstructed, they did not escape inclusion among literary traditions of Gilgamesh. One text variant of an excerpt from the epic identified Humbaba's home as "where the

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[140] Westenholz 1997.
[141] *RIME* 2.1.1.11 and 2.1.1.12.

Amorite dwells,"[142] perhaps validating the perspective that the epic was encoded with meanings that are not as transparent as we may assume. A contemporaneous recension of the Sumerian poem *Bilgamesh and the Netherworld* found at Me-Turran (Tell Haddad) references the Amorites, identifying them as lords of the netherworld.

> "Facing each man there are a thousand Amorites, his shade cannot push them off with his hands, he cannot charge them down with his chest. At the places in the Netherworld where the libations of water are made, the Amorite takes *precedence*."

> "Did you see the sons of Sumer and Akkad?"
>   "I saw them."
> "How do they fare?"
>   "They drink water from the place of a massacre, dirty water."
> "Did you see where my father and mother dwell?"
>   "I saw them."
> ["How do they fare?"]
>   "[The two] of them drink water from the place of a massacre, [dirty water]."[143]

The implications appear to be that as in life, in death, Amorites ruled. To the extent that *The Epic of Gilgamesh* served as a critique of kingship emanating from elite households, its origins during the OB Period – a period increasingly characterized by the rule of Amorite dynasties – may fundamentally mean that in some contexts it functioned as a popular critique of, specifically, Amorite hegemony. If so, it came together in scribal schools patronized mostly by elite households, which were overwhelmingly not Amorite. This could explain the surprising absence of references to Amorites in the epic as well as the symbolic critique of the glorification of the accomplishments of Akkadian-style kingship, exemplified as they are in the deeds of Gilgamesh, a Sumerian king. Whatever the case may be, the critique of kingship is clear and parallels could be easily drawn by audiences of the epic, written or oral, with contemporaneous rulers.

During the early second millennium BC, literary sources also reveal common ground among various ritual and cultic traditions, suggesting that this was a formative period in the appropriation of these themes through scribal curricula across the Near East. These traditions emanate in part from the *Enuma Elish*, the origins of which are traced to this period. The parricide motif, for example, is present in *Enuma Elish*, in the Apsu and Tiamat stories, and likewise later Ugaritic myths of Ba'al and Yamm.[144] Thorkild Jacobsen posited that second-millennium interconnections, namely Amorite ascendance

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[142] George 2009: 32–33, ln. 56.
[143] George 2003: 190.
[144] Jacobsen 1976: 167–68.

in Babylon, contributed to the existence of two second-millennium traditions, in Babylonia and at Ugarit, which, however, likely originated in the Levant.[145]

That the processes underlying the preservation of Sumerian literary traditions and the concomitant use of OB as the scribal medium was not restricted to one corner of the Near East is evidenced by wide-ranging collections and archives of MBA texts in zones identified with so-called Western Peripheral Akkadian or Levantine Akkadian. Significant OB cuneiform collections are attested at Alalakh,[146] and a number of texts from sites in Canaan such as Hazor.[147] It is unsurprising, then, that a fragment of a Babylonian diplomatic letter along with evidence of seal impressions was even recovered from Avaris in the eastern Nile Delta.[148]

The recognition of Western Peripheral Akkadian as a significant strand of OB scribal tradition is a relatively recent one. There is little doubt, however, that the smaller size of sites within the Levant contributed to this, often leading to incorrect assumptions about the existence and function of certain institutions and practices in the Levant when compared to Mesopotamia. From a primarily Mesopotamian-centric perspective, the assumption has been that smaller sites and their seemingly peripheral locations could not host comparable institutions and, if they did, they were not functionally comparable.[149] However, the tenability of such views is in question, particularly in light of the recent recovery of texts from MBA sites in the Levant and Egypt.[150] Of first consideration to correcting this perspective is the issue of the requirements for the preservation of individual tablets, to say nothing of tablet archives, namely sealed destructions at large sites and a limited amount of later disturbance.[151] In light of the limited number of large MBA sites in the Levant and its much smaller population during this period, statistically speaking, the Levant is disadvantaged to preserve large corpora as are more common to Mesopotamian sites. That said, the recent recovery of OB legal text, epistle, and seal fragments from Hazor and Avaris underscores the significance of cuneiform traditions in the Levant and the Egyptian Delta, where Amorite communities existed.

[145] Jacobsen 1968.
[146] Wiseman 1953; Lauinger 2011a; Lauinger 2011b.
[147] Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006: 10–15.
[148] See Schneider 2011. The evidence for OB attested at Avaris to date includes a letter from First Dynasty of Babylon likely dating to the reign of Ammi-Saduqa or Shamshi-Dutana of Babylon (Bietak, Forstner-Müller, van Koppen, et al. 2009: 115–18), a seal impression of an official of the First Dynasty of Babylon (Von Koppen and Lehmann 2012–2013), a seal impression with scene of a king and deities, and a cylinder seal from Ezbet Rushdi.
[149] Cohen 2002: 30–31.
[150] See esp. Maeir 2003.
[151] On this see Y. Cohen 2008: 84.

While it is unnecessary to argue for the existence of a large number of sizable scribal schools in the Levant during the MBA, there is substantial secondary evidence that such schools existed. This includes evidence for LBA scribal schools, which drew their curricula from OB scribal schools,[152] and there is neither a need to suggest nor is it likely that they were only introduced during the LBA. As Cohen observes, "Even if concrete proof of schooling activities is lacking, it is obvious that the faculty of writing was transmitted to these places by some means and put into practical purposes, as the letters, administrative documents, and inscribed personal seals demonstrate."[153] At Hazor the range of production of texts during the MBA suggest the presence of scribes within the city, to say nothing of the requirements of its correspondence with Mari during the eighteenth century BC. The OB texts include fragments of letters, legal proceedings, mathematical texts, liver models, and inscribed vessels.[154]

The existence and function of the *edubba*, the OB scribal school, as the center of the production of texts in the Levant during the MBA was likely, therefore, much like in the east, albeit on a more limited scale and thus less visible. While the institutions of the palace, including the temple, were certainly foci of scribal activity, there is no reason to doubt that within large centers of the Amorite west such as Ḫalab, Alalakh, Ebla, Hazor, Ashkelon, and even Avaris, scribal schools existed. As in the east, the *edubba* existed within the context of elite private residences.[155] They did not feature separate buildings and were, therefore, architecturally indistinct from the residences of which they were a part. The system was very much like that of private tutors, who for all intents and purposes could have been itinerant, as were traveling craftsmen in this period. While the production of texts among the larger sites of southern Mesopotamia during the MBA occurred in private *edubba*, in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant perhaps the palace may have been the center of most scribal activity.[156]

Although no specific scribal quarters have been identified in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant, the proxy data for reconstructing the world of scribes from archaeological contexts are considerable. Among them are a wide array of inscriptions that reveal the spread of Mesopotamian cuneiform scribal practices during the MBA. Within areas where so-called peripheral Akkadian traditions emerge, such as the Levant, the genres attested among recovered texts include lexical lists, letters, receipts, judicial rulings, administrative

[152] Cohen 2009: 47–54.
[153] Cohen 2008: 84.
[154] Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006: 65–72, 74–80, 83–85; Horowitz 2013.
[155] Veldhuis 1997: 24.
[156] See Ristvet 2014: 112–14.

documents, omens, and references to the existence of written legal trad-
itions.[157] Inasmuch as scale limited the size of the scribal schools of Amorite
states in the Levant, the issue is also largely one of preservation wherein
destroyed sites best preserve such documentary evidence. Lastly, alongside
the potential for Akkadian literary traditions spreading to the Amorite west,
there exists an important place for the role that orality played in the dissemin-
ation and preservation of traditions that were more commonly preserved in
writing in the east, where oral traditions are also assumed to have existed.[158]
Together, such vectors of transmission can reasonably account for a degree of
familiarity with what are traditionally identified as Mesopotamian traditions.

Monuments and Competitive Emulation

Together with literary and oral traditions of Mesopotamian kingship, monu-
ments of the early MBA also functioned to construct an ideal of Amorite
kingship in an age of competitive emulation. Mesopotamian exemplars are
again exposed as archetypes that were imitated and adapted in the west by
Amorite dynasties. Behind the immediate, if superficial, parallels between OB
styles and those of the Ur III is the reality that Akkadian royal monuments
were extant features of a number of OB urban centers in Mesopotamia and
pilgrimages, like that of Shamshi-Adad, were even made to Akkad.[159] It was,
after all, from Akkadian monuments that OB scribes copied Akkadian royal
inscriptions.[160] This has not been fully appreciated because of the extensive
looting of Babylonian monuments that saw the Naram-Sin stele and
Manishtushu obelisk, alongside Hammurapi's stele, carted off to Susa where
they were eventually discovered.[161] Added to this is that Akkad itself has yet to
be identified. Nevertheless, a range of early OB monuments, which were
features of the largest OB towns, points to the Akkadian Period as the inspir-
ation for the role of monumental traditions in the legitimation of a new class of
ruling elites in the early second millennium.

Palaces occupied perhaps the most important place in attempts to project
legitimacy among new rulers as early as the twentieth century BC. As discussed
in the preceding chapter, the OB palace of Zimri-Lim appears to have largely
continued that of the Shakkanakku Period (City II). With a footprint of 180 ×
130 m, it appears to have been based on the palace, which Mari's excavators

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[157] See Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006.
[158] This supplements the picture otherwise constructed by many scholars for the role of memory
and tradition in the early second millennium (see Ristvet 2014: 112–13).
[159] Westenholz 1997: 1–2nn2–3.
[160] Buccellati 1993.
[161] Crawford 2007; Harper 1992.

attributed to the reign of Hanun–Dagan (2000–1992 BC).[162] It stands in a long tradition of palaces in this location within the city, dating back to at least the mid-third millennium BC.[163] As such it reveals the degree of continuity that appears to have informed palace architecture during the early second millennium. Similar continuity is in evidence at Eshnunna from the Ur III to early OB Period, where its rulers engaged in its construction and rebuilding (see Figure 5.2), as well as in temple restoration, all of which are commemorated in their inscriptions.[164] Likewise, Sin-kashid's (1865–1833 BC) nineteenth-century palace at Uruk was built on a scale comparable to that of Mari's (see also Figure 5.2). While these palaces do not conform to a singular design, they served as the locus of traditions such as mural creation and hypogeum construction (see Chapter 5).

Patronizing temples, particularly their construction, like that of palaces, played a key role, as earlier, in the legitimation of early OB rulers.[165] Inscribed door sockets and other features provided kings the opportunity to broadcast their patronage of these institutions. Temple construction and renovation was not, however, always needed or possible, and these circumstances encouraged patronage by other means, including the donation of ritual or other symbolic votives that were inscribed. Stele and inscriptions were also erected, commemorating the deeds of their rulers. Albeit of varying sizes and more limited in their frequency, such stelae are referred to during the early OB Period for Ishme-Dagan of Isin (1953–1935 BC), and Kudur-Mabuk, father of Warad-Sin, of Larsa (1834–1822 BC).[166] There was also a marked proliferation of them after ca. 1800 BC (see Chapter 5). Needless to say, numerous other types of mini-monumental inscriptions, such as inscribed cones and brick that were later collected in tablets, known to scholars as Sammeltafeln, served similar purposes during the early second millennium among Isin's rulers.[167]

The construction of monumental fortifications and, inversely, the destruction of others, served as one basis for the legitimation of rulers in the early second millennium, as they had during the third millennium. As such, these monuments have been addressed in discussions of competitive emulation and conspicuous consumption, both of which they certainly reflect. However, these are mostly as the secondary result of warring states with very material concerns regarding the potential for periodic and relatively sudden deployments of large militaries over considerable distances.[168] Early OB inscriptions make explicit reference to the construction of fortifications as a kingly

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[162] Margueron 2014: 113–20.
[163] Ibid.: 101–13.
[164] Reichel 2001: 21–23.
[165] See *RIME* 4.2.13a.1 for but one example.
[166] *RIME* 4.1.4.10; 4.2.13a.1.
[167] *RIME* 4.1.2.3; 4.1.4.5; 4.1.4.6.

endeavor, as it was no less a signature accomplishment of Gilgamesh, as described in the epic.

> Gungunum, king of Larsa, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad, mighty heir of Sāmium, 6–10) in the course of one year made the bricks and built the great wall of Larsa named Utukibale-sadi ("the god Utu overtakes the rebellious land").[169]

The construction of such fortifications during the early MBA would gradually result in a highly regularized approach to the defense of cities, which was not only characteristic of southern Mesopotamia but, likely because of the increasing range of military campaigning, was adopted throughout the Levant and parts of Anatolia as well.[170]

Many of the symbols and traditions of Mesopotamian kingship assumed the form of a cosmopolitanism that was propagated by competitive emulation among rulers and other elites during the early second millennium. While they can be pieced together from disparate short inscriptions, the few lengthy inscriptions that are preserved encompass the varied activities associated with kingship in this period. They reveal the expectations associated with the legitimacy of contemporary rulers. One inscription belonging to the Amorite king, Nur-Adad of Larsa (1865–1849 BC), rather clearly exposes the function of these claims in their totality.

> [When the god Utu had decre]ed [the fate] of [Lar]sa; (and) the god, [youth] Utu had [tru]ly spoken his [command] which can[not] be altered to make firm [forever the foundation of] its [throne], to make [unc]easing its good [reign], to make [man]ifest its kings[hip], to [re]settle its [sc]- attered [people], to [build a pleasant residence. It was I, [Nur]–Adad, [shepherd of right]eousness whom he [tru]ly chose in his [*unfathomable* heart]. . .He gave to me the shepherdship of the [city] in which I was born. The providing for the shrine [U]r, the [c]are of the [shrine Ebabbar] . . . I heaped up mounds and stacks (of barley) for the god Utu. I enlarged the cattle pens and sheepfolds. I made oil and butter abundant. I had my people eat food of all kinds, (and) drink abundant water. I destroyed the brigand, the wicked, and the evil–doer in their midst. I made the weak, widow, and orphan content. During my good reign, according to the market value which was in my land, thus one shekel of silver purchased 2 *gur* of barley, 2 *ban* of oil, 10 minas of wool, 10 *gur* of dates. At that time, I built the great wall of Larsa like a mountain in a pure place. The wages of each worker were 3 *ban* of barley, 2 *sila* of bread, 2 *sila* of beer, 2 shekels of oil; thus, they received this in one day. In order to establish my name forever, I determined the holy perimeter

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[168] See Burke 2008: 159–62.

[169] *RIME* 4.2.5.3.

[170] Burke 2008: 80–81, 94–95.

of this great wall (and) named it Utu-umani-sa-bindu ("The god Utu has achieved his triumph"). By the true judgement of the god Utu, I counted among the ruins the wall of the city . . . with which I had joined battle. I made its (inhabitants) who did not submit bow down at the feet of the god Utu, my lord. I restored there the boundary of the god Utu, my lord.[171]

Nur-Adad managed to have several of his efforts as king of Larsa enshrined on inscribed clay cones such as this. It declares how the god Utu was seen to legitimize and favor the throne of Larsa by decree, echoing the legitimation of its dynasty in a fashion reminiscent of, and no less significant, than the Sumerian King List. Among the quintessential elements of kingship mentioned are, again, temple construction, the establishment of justice and social order, economic reforms, fortification construction, and war with Larsa's enemies.

The likening of kings to shepherds, as in the case of Nur-Adad's inscription, is an image replete throughout OB royal inscriptions from the beginning of the second millennium. It perpetuates the epithet of Gilgamesh, "he who is shepherd of the of Uruk-the-Sheepfold," in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.[172] The title was one attributed first to Gudea, as discussed in the preceding chapter, but also may have persisted in the Ur III, as preserved in the *Coronation of Ur-Nammu*, some copies of which may date to the Isin Period.[173] For the OB Period, it is perhaps most famously associated with Hammurapi's stele, where he is identified as "the shepherd, selected by the god Enlil" and "the shepherd who brings peace."[174]

Alongside the features previously mentioned, the perpetuation of an iconography of kingship also served to propagate perceptions of the legitimacy of new kings in the early second millennium BC. Under the dynasty of Isin, emphasis was placed initially on referencing Ur III traditions. Much of the symbolism that persisted can be identified in the *Coronation of Ur-Nammu*.[175] Central to the identity of the king was not only the role of monument maker, but also shepherd, and "king of the four quarters," which drew upon the Akkadian Period. They also include the physical symbols of kingship: the crown, holy scepter, and, appropriately, the staff and the crook. While physical representations of kingship in statuary are rare for most of the first two centuries of the second millennium, when these are attested in the later OB Period, as in the case of Hammurapi's stele (see Chapter 5), they perpetuate earlier iconography of kingship (see Chapter 3). The persistence of the

[171] *RIME* 4.2.8.20.
[172] George 2003: tablet I, ln. 71.
[173] Hallo 1966: 134, 41.
[174] Roth 1997: 77, 80, and 133.
[175] Hallo 1966; Flückiger-Hawker 1999.

presentation scene on seals provides, however, the clearest evidence of con-
tinuity in the portrayal of kings from the Ur III through the OB periods.

Another quite common image of OB kingship was associated with the lion,
which is consequently regarded as an enduring, nearly ubiquitous symbol of
Near Eastern kingship. The earliest deliberate use of lion imagery in texts may
be traced to the Ur III, after which the appropriation of such symbols became
increasingly common during the OB Period. Ur III royal hymns of Shulgi
identify him as a "lion, never failing in his vigor, standing firm in his strength,"
"lion with wide-open mouth," with the "vigor of a raging lion," a "lion with
awe-inspiring eyes," and a "lion with raised paw."[176] Gudea's hymns also
reference the imagery of lions, associated with the divine.[177] During the OB
Period, similar epithets are applied to Išme-Dagān ("body of a lion," "fierce
lion"), Lipit-Ishtar ("supreme lion who has no rival"), Rim-Sin ("lion with
raised paws"), and Hammurapi ("fierce lion").[178] Its value as a symbol of
power was likewise enhanced by the use of similar epithets for gods during
the OB Period.[179] Such symbolism persisted throughout the Iron Age.[180] Lion
statues appear at the OB temple of Shaduppum (Tell Harmal) and the so-called
Temple of the Lions at Mari, and they are incorporated into reliefs at Ebla.
They are also replete at Hazor during the LBA, though many of these basalt
orthostats likely originated during the MBA.

LONG-DISTANCE TRADE AND POLITICAL POWER

During the early second millennium, changes in political power were accom-
panied by the increasingly conspicuous role played by merchants. As discussed
in the previous chapter, merchants held greater economic and political power
within the Ur III bureaucratic apparatus than had been previously acknow-
ledged in reconstructions of the state. During the early MBA, trade centered
on the endeavors of merchants from individual city-states such as Assur and Ur.
New enclaves of merchants created a trade diaspora that left its indelible
imprint on the Near East, serving as a major conduit for cultural exchanges
during the early MBA. Thus, it is hardly surprising that immediately following
Ur's fall and in the absence of any imperial initiative, the revitalization of long-
distance exchange networks relied almost exclusively on the activities of an
emergent, elite merchant class in the establishment of interconnections

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[176] Watanabe 2000: 400.
[177] *RIME* 3/1.1.7.CylB.
[178] *RIME* 4.1.4.1; 4.1.4.8; 4.2.14.2005; 4.3.6.11.
[179] See *RIME* 4.3.6.11.
[180] In the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh is also likened to "a lion to Ephraim, and like a great lion to
    the house of Judah" (Hosea 5:14).

between far-flung communities. Their significance was not purely for the study of economics. Rather, they reveal how social, economic, and political power were fundamentally entangled, with each supporting the other.

In this work it is impossible to adequately convey the importance, duration, distance, scale, or mechanics of MBA trade as discussed in a number of studies of the OA merchants.[181] Overland trade in just the limited network documented by this corpus exposes the vast distances connecting regions that were likely as far away as Afghanistan, from which at least tin appears to have been shipped, and central if not western parts of Anatolia. Yet the presence of foreign merchants from Ebla, Amorite territories, and elsewhere at Kanesh, whose cultural influences were likely also felt in that city, illustrate the existence of networks connecting the Levant with Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and points east. As will be further described, networks through the Levant, which can be archaeologically reconstructed, reveal the southern extension of these long-distance routes into Egypt and into Nubia as well.[182] The MBA world was rather impressively networked.

The cargo of the largest OA caravan identified to date, which is referenced in four letters, might suffice to demonstrate the range of goods and commodities transported as part of MBA overland caravan trade, although the bulk of this trade centered on textiles, tin, and silver.

603 *kutānu* textiles, 100 of these of second quality

35 extra-fine *kutānu* textiles, 3 of these sealed by Ili-wedaku

64 Abarnian textiles

20 talents of tin under seal (600 kilos), plus tin for expenses

34 donkeys and their harnesses

12 further textiles

1 talent of scrap metal

600 nails

25 liters of oil plus 12½ liters of first-class oil

22 shekels of carnelian (c. 175 grams)

100 gemstones

bronze pins

plane logs

60 liters of saffron

13.6 kilograms of cedar fragrance[183]

[181] Larsen 1967; Larsen 1987; Dercksen 1996; Dercksen 2004; Larsen 2015: 171–201; Stratford 2017.

[182] Moreno García 2017: 113–20.

[183] Larsen 2015: 173.

Even the thirty-four donkeys bearing the load were to be disposed of as commodities on arrival in Kanesh. This inventory reads like a scaled–down, overland version of the manifest of the much later Uluburun shipwreck, and this without knowing whether other trinkets, knick-knacks, or items bound for a side trade also accompanied this load. Only during the second half of the MBA do we hear of much larger caravans as, for example, one consisting of three hundred men and three hundred donkeys.[184]

Old Assyrian seals in the Levant, as at Ashkelon, Beth-Shean, and Byblos,[185] suggest the detritus of down-the-line trade with Anatolia, if such merchants were not themselves present in the Levant. Meanwhile, the expeditions of pharaoh Amenemhet II might stand in as a proxy for the range of goods procured from the Levant in the early MBA, certainly for those highly prized: silver, gold, lead, white lead, Asiatic (ʿȝmw) copper (Amorite copper?), various bronze weapons, tools, and domestic implements as well as bronze and ivory daggers, oils of cedar, olive, and pinewood, and plants.[186] Minoan Kamares ware in the Levant also reveals exchange relationships with the Aegean world at this time.[187] A robust overland trade was evidently accompanied by a burgeoning maritime exchange which, as will be detailed, took off in the early MBA. Trade in this period was not only lucrative, it was extensive and far-ranging, and was a crucial context for the exchange of material culture, customs, and persons.

Merchants, Trade Diasporas, and Social Entanglement

Traded items during the MBA reveal the existence of robust, if often invisible, economic networks that embody extensive social networks and cultural exchanges. When taken together they expose interconnections between places as distant as Nubia, Afghanistan, the Indus, and Greece. Lapis lazuli and tin, for example, were traded from Afghanistan,[188] silver from Anatolia, textiles from Assur and other cities, and timber from Lebanon. Goods moved through overland networks across the Near East and via maritime networks in the eastern Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. Gold and other commodities were shipped from Egypt via maritime and terrestrial networks through the Levant to Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Greece. Ships from Dilmun (modern Bahrain) sailed the Persian Gulf bringing the goods of Dilmun, Magan, and the Indus to southern Mesopotamia's harbors, such as Ur.[189] By the later part of

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[184] ARM 26 432. For translation, see Heimpel 2003: 365.
[185] Collon 1987: 41.
[186] Marcus 2007.
[187] Merrillees 2003.
[188] Zöldföldi 2011: 245.
[189] Oppenheim 1954; Laursen and Steinkeller 2017.

the MBA, various inscriptions, from Babylon to Yamḥad, refer to individuals with the title "overseer of the merchants."[190]

Merchants, OB *tamkārū*, were able to provide not only material capital but social capital through the relationships they maintained with their distant home communities. These constituted the critical networks and bonds through which social and political relationships were established and maintained. In the context of MBA trade, merchants have been the subject of a great deal of research (see Chapter 5), and questions of their relationship to the palace have often dominated discussions. Some earlier scholarship has sought to relate mercantile activity to the emergence of Amorite rule during the early MBA in the Levant, though it remained lacking in details.[191] The result has been that the relationship between mercantile endeavors and political power at the start of the second millennium BC, outside of the OA network, has been mostly unstudied. A clearer articulation concerning the mechanisms by which trade brokered or established political power therefore remains to be undertaken.

Archaeological and textual sources for the early second millennium reveal that trade, as a basis for wealth and economic power, contributed substantially to the construction and maintenance of political power.[192] Merchants played a role in the projection of economic and political power of the distant polities they represented and therefore participated in a range of actions, from the exchange of goods, to the formation of treaties, intelligence gathering, and the establishment of enduring, long-lived merchant colonies, which over time and under particular conditions could achieve political and economic autonomy. Evidence of this process indicates that merchants were deeply entangled in the day-to-day life of their host communities. As long-term residents, they often married and raised families in these communities, and thus the lines between social, economic, and political life were entirely blurred.

Karū, trading collectives or guilds of foreign merchants, eventually became commonplace among OB centers.[193] Our understandings of *karū* operations rely, however, almost exclusively on more than twenty-three thousand texts from the OA colony at Kanesh (Kültepe) in central Anatolia.[194] The evidence from Kanesh does not point to a circumscribed physical space (e.g., neighborhood or quarter), as a literal translation of the term might suggest (e.g., "harbor/port/quay"). Rather, they were institutions or collectives that functioned to facilitate exchange between communities throughout the region and their home city, which in this case was Assur. These institutions played critical

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[190] ugula dam-gàr; see *RIME* 4.3.8.2007, 4.3.9.2013, and 4.3.10.2002.
[191] Gerstenblith 1983.
[192] Ilan 1995a: 305–8.
[193] For traditional definitions of the term, see *CAD* K, pp. 233–237.
[194] Larsen 1967.

roles in the establishment of merchant enclaves and the negotiations of relationships between merchants and their host communities.

The OA *kārum* originated from Assur in northern Mesopotamia, and it was responsible for establishing trade networks, including additional colonies, throughout Anatolia.[195] Although the enterprise appears to be a uniquely Assyrian one in a number of respects,[196] its operations and references to the existence of other networks in its correspondence expose the mechanisms of state-sponsored MBA trade out of Mesopotamia and the Levant, the echoes of which are again heard among the Mari correspondence in the eighteenth century and within other references to OB *karū* throughout the Near East. The OA merchant archives from Kanesh as well as the site's archaeological record reveal processes of identity negotiation among merchant communities that resulted from participation in long-distance overland networks in this period and formed the basis for many extensive and long-term cultural exchanges. Precursors to Assyrian trade originated during the Ur III when Assyrian merchants functioned within the provincial structure of the Ur III state, the legacy of which is attested in OA administrative, juridical, and intellectual traditions.[197] Indeed, the rapid expansion of the Assyrian trade network following the collapse of Ur is likely one of the best witnesses to the role of merchant communities in the revitalization of states at the start of the second millennium. As has been discussed elsewhere, phenomena such as the OA *karū* embody what may be referred to as trade diasporas, which feature varying outcomes with respect to their relationship with host communities from marginality to autonomy, and even domination over them.[198] To access the utility of this concept, we need not, however, accept the rigidity suggested in Gil Stein's model, but rather understand the range of interactions on a series of continuums relating to various aspects of daily life that were negotiated in these contexts, such as cuisine, cult, dress, burial customs, etc. Furthermore, the data require that these relationships must be understood as mutable with respect to their symmetry. Generally speaking, the longer-lasting, more populous, and economically powerful a merchant enclave was, the more likely that it could exercise substantive autonomy in different areas of the social and

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[195] For a recent survey, see Larsen 2015.
[196] Larsen 1976.
[197] Barjamovic 2011: 4–5.
[198] Gil Stein, building off work by Abner Cohen 1971 has described these as "inter-regional exchange networks composed of spatially dispersed specialized merchant groups that are culturally distinct, organizationally cohesive, and socially independent from their host communities while maintaining a high level of economic and social ties with related communities who define themselves in terms of the same general cultural identity" (Stein 2008: 30).

economic lives of its agents. This seems to have been the case in Kanesh for some time.

The OA archives illustrate how merchants also functioned as agents of the state. They served as diplomats, communicating messages between states and were thereby provided with specific protections and exemptions. These diplomatic efforts were fundamentally protectionist. Where sources permit, it seems that merchants were restricted in their direct dealings with merchants from rival political centers, since this was in conflict with the interests of the state. In one text, which baldly exposes key trade and political rivals, OA merchants were forbidden by the city assembly of Assur from trading silver or gold with Akkadian, Amorite, and Subarean merchants.[199] Extradition and death penalties were threatened for infractions,[200] though they most frequently would have simply served as deterrents. These prohibitions were far more significant to protecting the state's interests than those of the individual merchant, who were fundamentally impeded from taking maximum personal economic benefit from the circumstances they encountered. This was not free trade or capitalism. OA merchant treaties also reveal provisions that were intended to protect their citizens and their property abroad, but were principally concerned with protecting the state's political and economic interests. A portion of a recently discovered OA treaty is illustrative of this:

> You shall not deliver a citizen of Kanesh or an outsider into the house of an (Assyrian) merchant or widow. You shall not covet a fine house, a fine slave, a fine slave woman, a fine field, or a fine orchard belonging to any citizen of Assur, and you will not take (any of these).[201]

Consequently, inasmuch as treaties protected the interests of a state's merchants, it did so, as might be expected, within a framework governed by the interests of the state, particularly by enforcing a monopoly of trade in certain goods within certain markets. In this context it is significant, as suggested for the late OB law, that the vast majority of references to civil law in the OA archive concern civil law relating to inheritance and the control of assets by merchants and their descendants.[202]

One easily overlooked aspect of the OA merchant phenomenon is how the presence of foreign merchants settled abroad, whatever their numbers, functioned to establish land tenure by agents of a foreign state and how a foreign state could wield influence within another state's territory. The larger these enclaves were, the greater their potential influence. At Kanesh, for example, in addition to "merchants," a designation reserved for Assyrian merchants in OA

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[199] Veenhof 2008: 97n424.
[200] Ibid.: 98.
[201] Kt 00/k6. For translation, see V. Donbaz 2005: 65.
[202] Hertel 2013.

texts, other groups of merchants appear to have been identified by the languages they spoke, including Akkadians (i.e., Babylonians), Amorites, Subareans (i.e., Hurrians), and Eblaites.[203] While we cannot be sure of the size of other merchant enclaves at Kanesh, resident Assyrian merchants likely numbered more than 600, at least on a temporary basis, if the population of the commercial district was between 3,000 and 3,500 residents and adult males over the age of 20 were 20 percent of the population.[204] The city itself, at more than 170 ha, has been estimated to have been inhabited by as many as 25,000 residents during this period,[205] if not 17,000 residents based on a lower density coefficient for settlement (i.e., 100 per/ha). However, when these merchants are taken together with their families (even if married to women from the local population), this small contingent within the city (2 percent to 3.5 percent of its population) would have included their families and thus represented as much as 10–15 percent of the city's population (and these were only the Assyrian merchants who occupied the city). Despite the size of Kanesh, the impact of this large merchant enclave was significant during an early stage of the MBA. It is not difficult to imagine, therefore, the significance that such agents played in asserting their interests on behalf of a foreign state. This would be particularly likely during periods of instability and decline, which introduced opportunities for increased independence when the homeland's control over its merchant enclaves abroad waned. It remains unclear, for instance, what happened to Assyria's merchants after its colonial framework dissolved.

Despite our understandings of the operations of the OA *kārum* during the peak of its activities, its foundations are less well understood owing to the limitations of our sources. Although Assyrian merchants are known to have been present from the early twentieth century BC, the earliest correspondence dates only to Level II and begins in 1895 BC. For this reason, models must be proposed for how to understand its emergence as well as the role that its merchants played as mediators between Assur and the city of Kanesh in this process. The rise of Italian mercantile houses has been suggested as a means of understanding the dominance that the OA colonies played within the exchange corridors they exploited.[206] The evidence for the emergence of political power and influence resulting from the economic capital amassed in these ventures is instructive, particularly given the recent light shed on merchants within the Ur III establishment in the late third millennium. With about forty Assyrian *kārum* colonies and *wabartum* stations, the impact of this trade network was extensive. Given the abundant evidence for *karu* by

[203] Michel 2014: 72.
[204] For estimate of inhabitants of commercial district, see Hertel 2014: 43.
[205] Barjamovic 2014: 66.
[206] See Barjamovic 2011: 1.

different political organizations among so many Mesopotamian cities (see Chapter 5), the OA network serves to highlight the geographic reach of such mechanisms and the role played by foreign enclaves exercising both economic and political power abroad.

While merchants are often viewed as central culprits in cultural exchange on account of the items that moved via the exchange networks they plied, during the early second millennium they also embodied social exchanges, a legacy that outstripped the influence of their wares alone in influencing changes in social customs and practices. The Assyrian *kārum* documents provide many insights into the personal lives of the Assyrian merchants, their Anatolian families, and the networks of exchange that they had established throughout Anatolia as they brought in primarily tin and textiles and returned to Assyria with silver.[207] We know, for example, that Assyrian merchants married Anatolian women who they referred to as *amtum*, often in addition to their first wife (*aššatum*) in Assur. They established households away from Assyria, despite the fact that they had wives and children in Assur who complained to their husbands in letters that they were effectively abandoned, sometimes for years at a time. The successive generation seems to have sought to address this situation, however, by creating households in Kanesh, with fewer merchants seeking to maintain a second household in Assur. This appears to have contributed to some degree of alienation from traditional familial relations and increasing reliance on the creation of business partnerships outside the structures of the household. The result of this process may have contributed to a decline in the relationship of Assyrian merchants and Assur over time, forcing a greater reliance upon their local connections for most of their needs. During this process the political environment had shifted to increasingly centralized territorial states, between Level II (1895–1835 BC) and Level Ib (1835–? BC),[208] a process underway across the Near East by about 1800 BC. Early on, however, residential funerary chambers are also attested among the Assyrian merchants at Kanesh, while local Anatolia practices were quite different.[209] Emphasis was therefore placed on the maintenance of household identity, in part, through residential burial practices.

The legacy of such cross-cultural exchanges within the context of extensive trade networks such as the OA colonies are impossible to ignore. Literacy, for example, while far from common, spread under the requirements of administering complex and extensive trade networks. School texts from Kanesh but even more from Assur reveal the exact nature of this process.[210] Evidence of its effects might be measured in the increasing percentage of documents associated with Anatolian

[207] Larsen and Lassen 2014.
[208] Ibid.: 173–74.
[209] Larsen 2015: 47–49.
[210] Barjamovic 2011: 5.
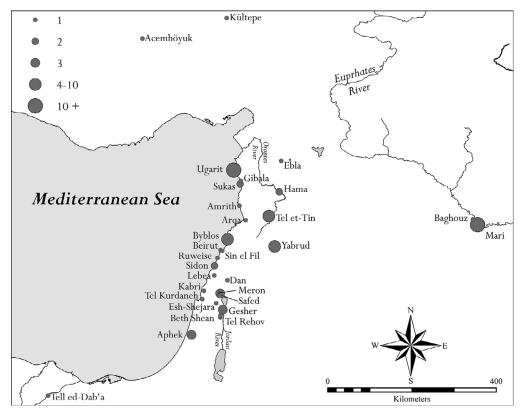
merchants, which grow nearly five-fold from Level II to Level Ib.[211] While it is not possible to articulate the full range of ways in which different groups interacted within the context of these trade colonies, suffice it to say, the engagements ran the gamut from intermarriage to direct conflict, with varying degrees of social interdependence. In addition to written and spoken language, customs that were shared include culinary practices and glyptic arts as well as cultic traditions.[212] In the absence of the texts and associated seals, however, it is currently impossible to identify the Assyrian merchants.[213] Nonetheless, the transforming role of Assyrian merchants in Anatolia is aptly summarized by Stephen Lumsden:

> While there were clearly power structures in place within Anatolian societies to deal competently with the sophisticated Assyrian mercantile system, both texts and material culture indicate that Anatolian societies and cultures were significantly altered during this period, perhaps within two or three generations. This transformation is represented by the emergence of new institutions and more complex social realities in urban settings, by an explosion in material culture, new technologies, new constitutive symbols, and an engagement with new artifacts.[214]

Further exacerbating the degree of entanglement to which merchant communities contributed is the reality that a city such as Kanesh hosted merchants from various foreign communities. Although the OA documents provide a unique lens into the cultural impact that merchants could have, these documents also play an important, if often overlooked, role in revealing that Assyrian merchants were not the only outside agents influencing practices within this community. Such references provide a basis for viewing these loci of exchange as a space in which identities of different individuals were being negotiated, though textual records preserve only a limited perspective on interactions, often fraught with ethnic and political overtones.[215] One Assyrian document exposes these tensions in the context of the exchange of gold: "The situation with respect to gold is as it used to be, namely that any colleague may sell to any other colleague. In accordance with the words of the stele no Assyrian at all may sell gold to an Akkadian, an Amorite or a Subarean. He who sells any will not live."[216] Whether rooted in an environment of fierce economic or political competition, such sentiments provide some of the clearest evidence of resistance and boundary making with respect to foreign merchants. In this regard, other texts from a number of sites in northern Mesopotamia also reveal potential

[211] Michel 2014: 73.
[212] Ibid.: 75–78; Larsen and Lassen 2014: 174–78.
[213] Larsen and Lassen 2014.
[214] Lumsden 2008: 28.
[215] See ibid., building on work by White 1991.
[216] kt 79/k 101.

4.5 Map of the distribution of excavated duck-bill axes.
Source: Schiestl 2008: 244. Map by Amy Karoll

competition in the textile trade from different communities.[217] It remains difficult, however, to be certain if such political proscriptions held sway over the individual social interactions of Assyrian merchants. How much, for example, did they actually engage with other communities of merchants? The texts have yet to shed light on this subject.

Communities such as Kanesh, where different groups converged to live and work together, reveal how social boundaries were negotiated during the early MBA. Despite Assyrian efforts to limit exchange, if not also greater contact, with groups such as Amorites, the archaeology of Kanesh reveals the city's, but also the Assyrian merchants', intensive consumption of goods from and participation in the traditions of greater Mesopotamia and the Levant. Among the lines of evidence are burial customs and the appearance of foreign temple types,[218] as well as the distribution of artifacts such as duck-bill axes throughout the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia (Figure 4.5).[219] Sub-floor residential

[217] Barjamovic 2011: 8–10.
[218] Özgüç 1986: pls. 86: 2a–b, pls. 89: 4, pls. 89: 5, 90: 1–4.
[219] Schiestl 2008: 244.

burials are relatively common during the colony's height throughout the lower town,[220] revealing a practice common among both Anatolians and Assyrians, which is also well attested across Mesopotamia and the Levant. Even the prevailing direct-axis temple type appears (see Chapter 3, also Figure 5.12).[221]

Despite Assyrian efforts to limit economic and exchange relationships between Assyrians and Amorites among others, Kanesh and places like it appear to have served as a middle ground in which a wide range of practices that originated in the Mesopotamian cultural sphere were gradually adopted not only by Anatolians, but also by Assyrians.[222] Such circumstances in Kanesh may also explain syncretistic practices such as personal oaths to the gods "Amurrum and Assur."

> "May the gods Assur and Amurrum be witnesses to this!"

> "May the gods Assur and Amurrum reject me if I did this or that."[223]

The first of these oaths is associated with Innaya, son of Amuraya, who returned to Kanesh from Assur in 1870 BC. It has been assumed that Amurrum represents a family god, though this is not certain. Nevertheless, such a glimpse into the lives of individual Assyrian merchants at Kanesh reveals the subtleties of foreign cultural influences at work in the lives of merchants.

Amorite Enclaves in the Eastern Delta

With the stability that followed the reconsolidation of political power in Egypt, new opportunities also coalesced around rekindled trade with the Levant, if only during the late twentieth century BC. This was embodied in the revival of the "Byblos run" that was at least partly responsible for restoring trade between Egypt and the Levantine coast and the establishment of a chain of early MBA harbors from the Levantine coast at least as far north as Byblos, though likely as far as Ugarit, to the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. Over the course of the early MK opportunities associated with the eastern Delta appear to have gradually eclipsed Asiatic roles in activities such as professional sol-diering. As such, the revival of commercial activity likely played a pivotal role, therefore, in the foundation of Asiatic, notably Amorite, enclaves within settlements like Avaris in the eastern Delta and smaller communities, as at Tell el-Maskhuta.

While the OA trade colony at Kanesh provides a particularly robust and well-documented example of early second millennium mercantile enterprise,

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[220] Larsen 2015: 47–49.
[221] Özgüç 1999.
[222] Heffron 2017.
[223] See references in Larsen 2015: 267–68.

during the same period, just beyond the western tip of the Fertile Crescent lay the Egyptian town of Avaris. As suggested earlier, this early MK royal town likely served initially as a departure point for Pharaonic campaigns into the Levant. It gradually grew away from the river to the east and south, with the newest quarters appearing there,[224] and by the second half of the MK, it reached approximately 75 ha and comprised a mixed community of Egyptians and Asiatics.[225] Its size was by then comparable with the largest centers in the Levant and many in Mesopotamia.

Archaeological contexts associated with the Asiatic population at Avaris play a significant role in the identification of its development, particularly during the MK, from a military town with outward looking concerns to one that was increasingly receptive to Asiatics who represented burgeoning trade networks and new streams of immigration. As yet another testament to the transformative effects of long-distance exchange during this period, Avaris became home to a range of Near Eastern merchants who plied both the maritime route along the Levantine coast as well as the overland caravan road that connected it to the northern Levant and regions beyond. Indeed, the interconnectedness of trade networks across the Near East, while only attested piecemeal among textual sources, is betrayed by a host of finds. These include OA cylinder seals excavated at Ashkelon, OB and Old Syrian seal impressions, and items in Egypt, such as lapis lazuli that appear to have made their way via trade networks from Iran, most likely via Mesopotamia and the Levant, as there is no evidence for Egyptian seaborne transport in the Indian Ocean. Although some of the farthest of these exchanges may have been the product of down-the-line trade, the data from Avaris as well as Kanesh suggest that individual merchant networks spanned hundreds of kilometers as part of larger networks covering several thousand kilometers. In so doing, these networks put foreign merchants in proximity to both the members of these host communities and other foreign merchants, as witnessed at Kanesh. Avaris yields ample data for the long-term habitation of Semitic merchants alongside Egyptians. This situation is, however, exactly the opposite from Kanesh in that archaeological remains at Avaris betray the presence of these foreign merchants in the complete absence of textual sources to describe their business operations. In addition to the significant role that Avaris played as a point of deployment for MK campaigns and a likely processing point for Asiatic captives, plunder, and tribute, Avaris provides important insights into Asiatic-Egyptian relations during the early MBA.

[224] Area A/V provided a sequence of occupation at Avaris mostly from the late Hyksos period (see Hein and Jánosi 2004).
[225] Bietak 1996: 5.

A profound, if subtle, insight concerning these relations at Avaris includes evidence for the existence of distinct social networks of Asiatics who composed this foreign population. The archaeological record of Avaris illustrates that it hosted both maritime ship and overland caravan traffic from the Levant with significant involvement, if not some degree of integration, of Asiatics in local administration. The Asiatics who settled at Avaris during the MK likely had been employed for their varied expertise as mercenaries, shipwrights, sailors, metalsmiths, and specialized craftspeople, in addition to cattle herders, shepherds, and expedition guides.[226] But to what extent the Asiatic presence during the second half of the MK was the product of the introduction of captives from earlier military activity in the Levant or the existence of independent Asiatic mercantile enclaves cannot be ascertained. Early MBA "warrior" burials at Avaris in the Nile Delta during the MK points to this as a potential interpretation of the context for the arrival and settling of Asiatics in Egypt, and not just the Delta, even if the primary capacity of many of these individuals was the leading and protecting of caravans, a traditional duty of mercenaries such as the Suteans, an Amorite tribe in Mesopotamia.[227]

No later than the late MK the evidence for an expanding Asiatic population at Avaris is illustrated by a wide range of finds, including ceramics, metalwork, burials, and other elements of material culture associated with life and death in this foreign population. The presence of individuals at Avaris, who are otherwise referred to as ꜥꜣmw, Asiatics, in contemporaneous Egyptian texts, was already impressive. Recent evaluation of the chronological correlations for the site's early MBA stratigraphic sequence demonstrate that the stratigraphy associated with Strata H and G can be dated earlier than traditionally suggested,[228] and for the purposes of this discussion represent the period roughly between 1920 and 1810 BC.

On the western side of the site in Stratum H, in Area F/I, phase d/2 ("New Center," ca. 1920–1890 BC), the renewal of settlement in this area, after a conjectured hiatus, was marked by a so-called *Mittelsaalhaus* or courtyard-type house.[229] Although often identified as Levantine, the general plan has parallels from the Levant to Mesopotamia.[230] Flat-bottomed cooking pots of a type

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[226] Ibid.: 14–20.

[227] Ziegler and Reculeau 2014.

[228] Concerning Tell ed-Dabʿa's stratigraphy, I have adopted Middle Chronology dates for the site's various phases. These dates are raised by one hundred years for most phases. A dearth of radiocarbon dates from most of its MBA contexts, discontiguous stratigraphic sequences, and overestimation of the durations of hiatuses in certain areas of the site, all contribute to the lowering of dates advanced by Bietak. Thus, for consistency the Middle Chronology is also adopted for Avaris, which is now also borne out by radiocarbon results (see Höflmayer et al. 2016).

[229] Bietak 1996: 10; Eigner 1985: 19–25.

[230] Daviau 1993: 69–218.

common in the southern Levant during the early MBA were evidently imported during phase d/2,[231] and thereby provide the most direct witness to Levantine Asiatics dwelling at Avaris.[232] There could be almost no other vessel that so clearly testifies to the presence of southern Levantine groups like cooking pots since food preparation is tightly correlated with identity maintenance.[233]

In close proximity to this house was a cemetery to its south.[234] The burials of the Area F/I cemetery largely consist of rectangular, mudbrick-built chambers intended to accommodate a single individual.[235] Although the burial practices in the cemetery appear to suggest Egyptian funerary architecture and feature a preponderance of Egyptian vessels, the spatial accommodation of burials and many of the most distinctive burial goods are reflective of Levantine burial customs, while suggesting accommodations to local traditions. Levantine ceramics, notably Levantine Painted Ware, "Canaanite" commercial jars, and dipper juglets, constitute a relatively small percentage of the assemblage of these burials, though this is unsurprising. At Kanesh, by contrast, no ceramic finds at all correlate with the presence of Assyrian merchants. Far more conspicuous as an Asiatic tradition, however, was the inclusion of weapons within the burials, notably the duck-bill ax, the javelin or spear, and the double mid-ribbed dagger, which accompanied roughly 50 percent of the so-called warrior burials associated with males.[236] As the cemetery continued in use in phase d/1, there was an increase in the number of Asiatic burials, including complexes attached to houses, with a pronounced increase in donkey burials outside the tombs and the sacrifice of sheep or goats,[237] all of which are traditions with their most immediate parallels in the southern Levant.[238] The addition of burial structures attached to or near houses mirrors the gradual proliferation of residential burial complexes during the first part of the MBA in the Near East,[239] and may indeed be a variant of this tradition adapted to the local environment, where the high water table thwarted subterranean burial.

Also correlated with identity is evidence for Asiatic dress recovered from burials of this early period. Among this evidence is a damaged statue of an unnamed Asiatic featuring Asiatic dress and hairstyle, and brandishing a

[231] Aston 2002: 45–46.
[232] Ibid.: 45–46, fig. 11: 1–3.
[233] Goody 1982.
[234] Schiestl 2009.
[235] Schiestl 2002.
[236] Schiestl 2009: 106–9.
[237] Ibid.: 179–84.
[238] Wapnish 1997.
[239] Laneri 2014.

throwstick, all of which are characteristically identified with Asiatics by Egyptians.[240] This statue appears to have been associated with one of the funerary chapels in the cemetery of F/I. Similarly, Asiatic burials from this period furnish the earliest evidence for the use of toggle pins at the site, underscoring that dress was a cultural distinctive of this community. These were usually found on the left shoulder for binding the robes of buried individuals and occur among both male and female burials.[241]

Although percentages for the presence of certain ceramic types can only be used cautiously and a renewed, detailed study is warranted, it has been suggested that 24 percent of the ceramics within the tombs of Stratum G/4 (phase d/1, ca. 1890–1850 BC) were imports from the Levant. Most common among them was the Canaanite storejar,[242] a marker of Eastern Mediterranean maritime trade, especially with the Levant, as these were too large for overland transport. Weapons were characteristically Levantine, including ornately decorated daggers with gold appliques. One individual was even interred with an amethyst scarab ring inscribed with an Egyptian name and the title "ruler/overseer of foreign lands" or "ruler of Retenu."[243] He occupied one of the largest tombs in the cemetery, which – albeit heavily looted – was outfitted with multiple burials and included at least two daggers, spears, jewelry, vessels, and equid burials.[244] While the tombs in Area F/I include accoutrements typical of Levantine burials, the employment of mudbrick-built superstructures of Egyptian type with addition of trees outside the vaults, as indicated by pits, also reveals an overt effort to incorporate Egyptian customs,[245] exposing increasing evidence for the emergence of a "hybrid" culture at Avaris that blended Egyptian and Amorite practices, as relationships were negotiated between these broader groups.[246]

Because of the proximity of this cemetery to the administrative building to its north during phase d/1, Manfred Bietak suggests a significant relationship between the Asiatic men who were interred here – fewer women and children are present than during the earlier cemetery – and the official activities of the Egyptian authorities.[247] The religious affinities of those in the palace is also potentially revealed as, for example, by a hematite cylinder seal depicting the northern Syrian weather god Hadad found in the northern part of the

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[240] Schiestl 2006; Schiestl 2009: 77–84.
[241] Philip 2006: 160–61, 221–23; Bietak 2016.
[242] Schiestl 2002: 343.
[243] Martin 1998.
[244] For this tomb, F/I-m/18-Grab 3, see Schiestl 2009: 362–88.
[245] See Schiestl 2008.
[246] Bader 2013.
[247] Bietak 2001a: 351.
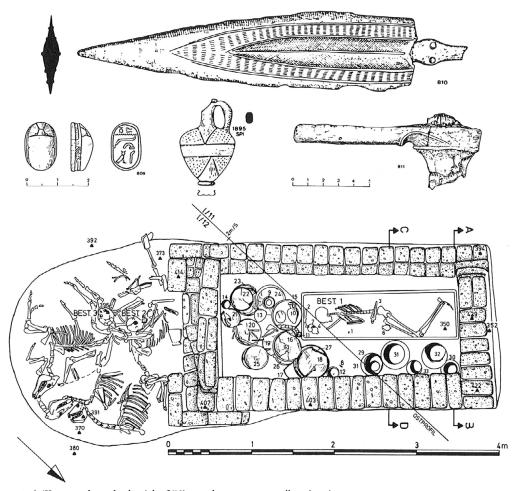
palace.[248] Thus, a formalization of relations between Asiatics and adminis-trative officials may have occurred by the late MK. The administrative com-plex was suddenly abandoned thereafter, possibly at the start of the Thirteenth Dynasty, as indicated by construction tools left on the floors and the blocking of doors.[249]

The houses of Stratum G in Area A/II (phase c; ca. 1850–1810 BC), the so-called Eastern Town, are said to have belonged to Asiatics.[250] During Stratum G there is also ample evidence for various forms of craftwork, particularly metallurgical activities, illustrated by limestone and clay molds for tools and weapons found in the center of the city (Area F/I), with a smaller quantity originating with the A/I-IV settlement of the Eastern Town.[251] While many of the molds are those typical for Egyptian tools and weapons, others, particu-larly of the two-piece type and made of steatite rather than limestone, include those for daggers and chisel axes characteristic of the "warrior" burials previ-ously mentioned. Thus, certain technologies, such as those embodied in the production of Asiatic-type weapons, appear to have accompanied these foreign communities into the eastern Delta.

By Stratum F, nearly 40 percent of the ceramic assemblage, as for example in Area F/I (phase b/3; ca. 1810–1780 BC), consists of forms mostly typical (with a few exceptions) to the southern Levantine assemblage, with three-quarters of these vessels imported and the remainder locally produced.[252] This percentage is a substantial increase from the figure of 18 percent to 20 percent of the assemblage that comprised Levantine types during Stratum H.[253] Apart from the issue of what percentage of this assemblage was imported, the quantitative increase reveals an affinity for the consumption of Levantine forms that correlates with and is itself indicative of the increasing intensity of Asiatic presence at the site. It cannot be otherwise dismissed as production for local Egyptian tastes, as no comparable phenomenon is attested at other MK sites. Consequently, ceramics provide one important index of the increasing Asiatic population at Avaris.

During this phase the evolution of Asiatic settlement culminated in an impressive presence in Area A/II as an eastern suburb of Avaris where a late MB I Asiatic cemetery developed, which would continue to function into the Hyksos Period.[254] The burial of "ꜥꜣmw, deputy treasurer," for example, possesses the hallmarks of so-called warrior burials typical to the Levant and

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[248] See Porada 1984; see also Bietak 2010: 157–59.
[249] Bietak 1996: 29.
[250] Ibid.: 31.
[251] Ibid.: 31, fig. 28; Philip 2006: 169–97.
[252] Bietak 2010: 151.
[253] Bietak 1991a: 32; see also Aston 2002: 43–44.
[254] Bietak 1991b: 39–75; Bietak 1996: 36–48; Forstner-Müller 2002.

4.6 A/II-1, tomb 5, the burial of "ʿ3mw, deputy treasurer" at Avaris.
Source: Bietak 1996: 42, fig. 35. Reproduced courtesy of Manfred Bietak

northern Mesopotamia during the early MBA (Figure 4.6).[255] He was buried alone in a coffin, lying on his side with a dagger on his hip and in possession of a chisel ax. That his capacity was less martial than administrative, and his weapons effectively ceremonial, may be indicated, however, in that his burial included a scarab with his official title as well as his name. This may suggest his integration into a local administrative role, if this was not a title connected with his capacity within the *kārum* to which he belonged. Nevertheless, his status, and likely association with caravan trade, was further marked by the presence of six donkeys – the most attested in any burial at Avaris to date – interred in front of his mudbrick cist chamber, along with the remains of three human burials. The ceramics, likewise, are overwhelmingly Levantine, confirming his

[255] Bietak 1991b: 51–60.

affinity for Levantine burial customs, foodstuffs, and rituals.[256] Although Bietak has suggested that ꜥꜣmw's burial should be connected with the reign of Nehesy, the uncertain association of the door jambs bearing Nehesy's inscription, which at best might belong to the later Stratum E/3 Temple I,[257] suggest that his burial antedated the so-called kingdom of Nehesy.

Most of the burials contemporaneous with this one in the cemetery reveal practices consistent with those of populations in the southern Levant, particularly for male burials during the early MBA. The inclusion of a standard array of weapons fits with exemplars from the Levant and northern Mesopotamia. Although the majority of vessels are locally produced bowls and cups, which stand in for similar common ware bowls in the Levant, the inclusion of more distinctly Levantine types such as juglets and storage jars are conspicuous. Burial chambers likely consisted of immediate family relations, while "Canaanite" transport amphorae were used as ready coffins for infant burials,[258] though this practice is also attested among MK Egyptian burials. During this period, the appearance of so-called servant burials, which consist of individual women buried in a pit outside the main burial vault for a male, may be more appropriately interpreted to reflect the marriage of Asiatic men to non-Asiatic, possibly even Nubian, women since it has been compared with contemporaneous practices attested in Nubia.[259]

In the context of the hybrid archaeological character of Avaris during the late MK, Nadine Moeller's statement seems particularly a propos: "[B]y the late Twelfth Dynasty, there is not a single burial or building that did not exhibit some foreign elements in addition to Egyptian features, which makes it unlikely that any Egyptians were among the inhabitants."[260] Although we must acknowledge the very real possibility that some Egyptians likely did inhabit these neighborhoods, whether through intermarriage to Asiatics or having adopted some Asiatic customs and being less traditional in their exhibition of Egyptian customs, there can be little doubt about the pervasive influence of Levantine traditions. It remains then to consider the vectors of the transmissions of these traditions at Avaris, their potential points of origin, and the possibility of its identification with Amorite groups in Southwest Asia.

Trade Networks and Security

Despite the preponderance of material culture from Avaris with direct associations with Asiatic communities in the Near East and its consideration as

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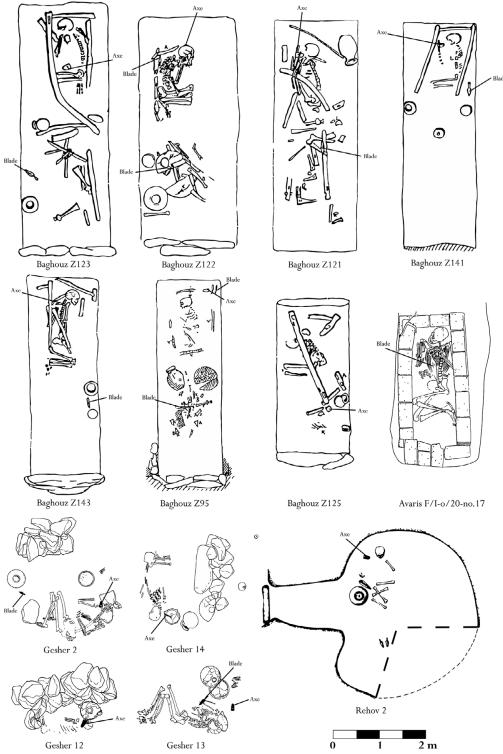
[256] Bietak 1996: 41.
[257] Bietak 1991b: 51; Bietak 1996: 40–41.
[258] Bietak 1996: 45.
[259] Bietak 1989; Winkler and Wilfing 1991: 90–120.
[260] Moeller 2016: 326.

evidence of various forms of cultural interaction,[261] outright qualification of even some of the Asiatic population of its early MBA as specifically Amorite has been largely unexplored. Yet the totality of evidence from Avaris provides a basis for extending this ascription to some of the Asiatic population at Avaris and considering still further what other groups may be represented there. This argument moves, however, necessarily beyond traditional trait-list approaches, recognizing instead the underlying customs and social contexts that communities from the eastern Delta to the Levant shared, which may betray the identity of the social and economic networks to which they were affiliated.

Broadly speaking, these networks reveal two distinct corridors of movement leading to Avaris from the Levant, the overland and maritime routes, which may even be reflected in the original name of Avaris, "The-door-of-the-Two-Roads." While on the face of it this may be regarded as a simple observation, it has profound implications for social and economic interpretations in light of what we know regarding Levantine and Mesopotamian networks. These two roads represent at least two very distinct, if broad, socioeconomic networks, a conclusion resulting principally from archaeological rather than textual sources, specifically goods traded from both regions, which evidently came to Egypt via these separate networks, as well as other customs of burial, dress, or religious practice that might be more closely affiliated with either the northern or southern Levant. With the characterization of Amorite as a social identity during the early MBA, and in light of the two geographic points of origin that have been suggested for Asiatics at Avaris – the northern and southern Levant, the evidence almost certainly qualifies this foreign component as Amorite overall. This is not to say, however, that we can or should exclude Akkadians, Assyrians, Hurrians or others from identification in archaeological contexts at Avaris as well. Rather, we can *at least* conclude with considerable confidence that Amorites are well accounted for among the data available thus far and that they likely represent groups from both the northern and southern Levant. This vastly complicates the issue of disentangling such identifications, but more accurately reflects the complexity of social relationships that existed during the early second millennium, in a fashion well reflected in the OA evidence. Furthermore, based on the limits of the data, it is unproductive to seek to identify one or another of these broad streams of influence as predominating during one or another part of the early MBA, as no individual archaeological metric correlates with a singular expression of behavior or mechanism of transmission.

The overland networks that contributed to Asiatic settlement in the eastern Delta at Avaris, but also at Maskhuta and sites like it in the Wadi Tumilat,[262] are perhaps best represented by the burials of individual Asiatic males (Figure 4.6). These individual burials, many of which are among the "warrior"

[261] Bader 2011b; Bader 2011a; Bader 2012; Bader 2013.
[262] Holladay 1997.

4.7 Early Middle Bronze Age "warrior" burials with duck-bill axes.
Drawing by author. Illustration by Amy Karoll

burial type, may be one of the clearest elements that ties Asiatics of Avaris to the Levant and Mesopotamia and suggests their social identification, in the broadest sense, as members of Amorite communities from Southwest Asia. These burials are attested across a broad arc of the ancient Near East from Baghouz, near Mari along the Euphrates, to Gesher and Rehov in the Jordan Valley, and Avaris in the eastern Delta (Figure 4.7).[263] As the texts of the OA *kārum* reveal, adult males were the central figures engaged in long-distance overland trade, maintaining homes and sometimes separate households at both ends of their trade networks, and possibly marrying only in a later generation. The early evidence for male burials at Avaris, only occasionally accompanied by females and children, arguably fits very well into this pattern. Furthermore, the gradual development of burial chambers attached to homes would appear to correspond to the later development of these and other households, which often persisted in burying within the same chambers for successive generations. The varied timings of the deaths of wives, sons, daughters, or servants may account for the earlier burial of males in some cases, followed by later interments of family members, and may explain the variations in orientation of these burials, as possibly in the case of the so-called servant burials mentioned earlier.

The martial nature of the burials may at first seem incongruous with the activities of merchants or caravaneers, but there are good grounds for considering these interred implements as representative of the tools of the merchant's business during the early MBA. Evidence from the OA texts reveals various security concerns for caravaneers in Anatolia – from warfare between states to general insecurity on the roads between states.[264] This concern may even be echoed in the recurring expression in OA correspondence: "I will take my weapon and come."[265] These concerns were, of course, no less relevant concerning passage through broad stretches of Mesopotamia and the Levant, which were home to nascent states with limited control of their territories and the roads through them. These individuals were buried, therefore, in what might be characterized as their finest professional regalia, arrayed with the panoply of their trade: with daggers and a spear most often, but sometimes also axes and ornate belts. It is clear that some of these burials feature what are most certainly ceremonial versions of these items, notably when they are made of silver or gold.[266] Irrespective of whether these individuals were required to have ever exercised these weapons as part of their trade – and the dearth of

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[263] For discussions of the phenomenon, see Philip 1995; Garfinkel 2001; Rehm 2003; Cohen 2012; Kletter and Levi 2016. For major excavations of such cemeteries, see du Mesnil du Buisson 1948; Garfinkel and Cohen 2007.

[264] Larsen 2015: 141–42.

[265] I thank Gojko Barjamovic for calling this expression to my attention. For examples of it, see Stratford 2017: 108, 110n38.

[266] Caspi, Ettedgui, Rivin, et al. 2009.

injuries suggest that this was, at best, very infrequent – the success of their trade relied upon its security. Just as OA merchants were required to manage nearly every aspect of their travel, transport, and accounting for their cargo, the evidence would suggest that they, and their contemporaries, were to a large extent responsible for their own security during their activities.

The blurry line between the security requirements of caravans and mercenary work, the core of which has always entailed protection detail, also evokes the activities of one Mesopotamian group in particular, the Suteans, who were known for guiding and protecting caravans.[267] It may even be that many examples of this burial type, from Baghouz on the Euphrates to the southern Levant and Avaris, were actually those of Suteans (Figure 4.7). Even if some of these burials were to be identified as Sutean caravaneers, whose affiliation with Amorites seems likely, one individual whose name was ꜥꜣmw bore a distinctly Amorite name, inscribed on a scarab (Figure 4.6). This nominal element is common among Amorite names like Hammurapi, where the element ʿammu or ḫammu refers to a "paternal uncle" or even a "master."[268] In this case, in addition to the elements of his burial that signal Levantine connections, his name associated him with Amorite naming conventions at a time when Amorites were the prevailing social identity in the Levant.

Another element reflecting their social and economic standing are the occasional presence of equid burials with the "warrior" burials, which are suggestive of the association of these individuals with caravan trade, as has been previously observed. Yet the significance of this can also be easily overlooked since by including these as part of their burials they distinguished themselves from other Asiatics, particularly those who may have been connected with maritime trade – to say nothing of other occupations – and who doubtlessly also inhabited various quarters of Avaris. Equid burials may also have served as a means of association with specific communities in the southern part of Canaan, where similar practices are attested, if often from slightly later MBA contexts.[269] Thus, their economic standing, social status, and regional affiliations were made abundantly clear through a selection of specific paraphernalia. Simply put, "warrior" burials at Avaris functioned as markers of foreign male identity, signaling ties to specific social networks in the Levant. Items atypical of trade, such as foreign cooking pot types, likewise reveal shared foodways and culinary traditions, as do persistent traditions of foreign

[267] Ziegler and Reculeau 2014; Charpin 2010.
[268] Streck 2000: 92–93. Even though until now the mid-third-millennium population of the Levant, which was referred to by this term as early as the Sixth Dynasty, has not been linguistically identified with Amorites, this is not a basis for dismissing this association (contra Schneider 2016).
[269] Wapnish 1997.
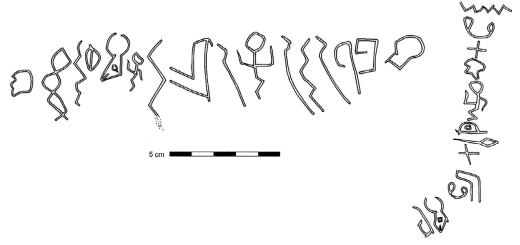
dress and ornamentation, evidenced in statuary and belts that are non-Egyptian but are common in the Levant.

Bound up in this single archaeological context was the full range of practices associated with non-Egyptian, Asiatic, and more precisely, Levantine Amorite traditions: social and economic identity, dress, culinary, ritual, and mortuary customs. Despite inclusion of some Egyptian artifacts, the individuality of the burials reveals a substantial indifference to local customs and ties, and they reflect an effort to maintain a separateness or "foreignness" that was tied to burial traditions in the Levant and parts of northern Mesopotamia. Remaining similarities with Egyptian burials, structural or otherwise, are likely the product of a range of mostly functional concerns. But there is no evident preference for "Egyptian" things and no truly clear allusions to distinct Egyptian burial traditions, including their location within the settlement, which once again reflects Levantine customs. Even the employment of wooden coffins cannot be considered quintessentially Egyptian, with little of any such efforts preserved among the conditions of most burials in the Levant. Their identities in death appear, therefore, to have mirrored to a great extent their social situation in life. This could hardly have gone unnoticed by Egyptians living in Avaris but even more so in the Nile Valley, where burial practices contrasted substantially. Thus, these burials likely functioned as a principal means of signaling cultural boundaries in death, as the very walls of the mudbrick structures themselves embodied. This was even more so the case for burials attached to houses that distanced Amorites still further from incorporation into local Egyptian society and cultural practices. Boundaries were actively maintained at Avaris through customs, many of which possess material correlates.

Beyond the presence of merchants, mercenary labor was a major form of employ for Amorites in Egypt during the MK, as observed earlier. The need for mercenaries to guard caravans, for instance, is witnessed in the *Tale of Sinuhe*, where Sinuhe is said to have "rescued him who had been robbed," presumably on the roads of Retenu.[270] The employment of Amorite mercenaries in Egypt also persisted during the MK, apparently until its end. From Wadi el-Hol, which lies about half way between Thebes and the northern side of the Qena Bend, come two still undeciphered early West Semitic inscriptions, probably carved by an Egyptian military scribe and quite possibly representing written Amorite (Figure 4.8), which likely date to the reign of Amenemhet III (1843–1797 BC).[271] The identification of these individuals as mercenaries is suggested by the occurrence of the title "general of the Asiatics," which appears in a number of Egyptian texts and inscriptions, including those

[270] Lichtheim 1997b, p. 79, lns. 95–100.
[271] Darnell, Dobbs-Allsopp, Lundberg, et al. 2005: 88–90.

4.8 Possible Amorite inscriptions from Wadi el-Hol.
Source: Darnell et al. 2005, figs. 2 and 16. Illustration by author

at a Wadi el-Hol.[272] A nearby Egyptian inscription makes reference to Asiatics, seemingly as a post in the Egyptian army:

> The general of the Asiatics (ꜥꜣmw), Bebi;
> his daughter Maatherankheni;
> the royal messenger Bebi;
> the express courier Hornebkhasutem.[273]

While this title suggests the presence of Asiatics in Egypt in a martial capacity, there is no reason on the basis of these references to infer that the so-called general of the Asiatics,[274] or perhaps more appropriately, "general of the Amorites," was only a professional title or a position exclusively reserved for someone of Amorite ancestry. Indeed, it would seem to be that those holding this position were already identifying at least partly as Egyptian on the basis of their names. This appears to be analogous with the contemporary occurrence of the military title "chief of the Amorites" in southern Mesopotamia, discussed earlier, which while likely originating in a specific historical context of Amorite mercenary service, was eventually largely disassociated from its original identification with Amorites as a social group. Thus, interestingly, even positions such as "scribe of the Asiatics" or rather "scribe of the Amorites" are also attested in MK papyri,[275] once again paralleling, right down to specific ranks and designations, the situation attested in Mesopotamia.

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[272] Ibid.: 103na.
[273] Ibid.: 88.
[274] Ibid.: 103.
[275] Kaplony-Heckel 1971: 3, 5–6.

The "scribe," just as in the case of the "general," certainly need not have been Asiatic nor necessarily writing in Amorite or Akkadian by the period to which this inscription belongs. Yet the origin of the post in connection with an Asiatic military unit serving in Egypt was likely one that accompanied the formation of distinct Amorite mercenary units during the early second millennium.

The picture that emerges from the archaeological remains from early MBA Avaris that were discussed earlier reflects, then, the type of socially ambiguous relationships we would expect from a social and economic environment within a major port city in MK Egypt. On the basis of the evidence, neither a single origin nor a single vector of transmission should be viewed as responsible for the complex archaeological contexts witnessed in the eastern Nile Delta during the early second millennium. They certainly do not yet permit clear associations with political regimes or specific polities in the Levant or beyond at any point during the MBA, in contrast to earlier suggestions.[276] What is clear, however, is that Asiatics embracing traditional Amorite customs inhabited Avaris before the late MK based on the chronological evidence available. Furthermore, although not all Asiatics at Avaris need have participated in long-distance trade, there is little doubt that much of this early population of foreigners did, while others engaged in a variety of local crafts brought from their homelands, whether in the production of Levantine ceramics, tools, weapons, and likely even elements of dress and adornment. The evidence for these crafts reveals the maintenance of important elements of Amorite cultural identity that, along with their burial customs, affiliate this population with Levantine populations who, in the absence of additional data, can be identified as Amorite, respecting the reality that this was largely a social identity to which different tribal identities were increasingly affiliated. In the future, the more interesting questions will ultimately relate to the specific tribes or more specific social groupings under the Amorite banner to which various individuals at Avaris may have belonged.

It is clear, therefore, that Egypt's sizable Asiatic population during the MK was not entirely composed of slaves, whether from war or slave trading. In addition to refugees, captives, and mercenaries, cattle herding and pastoralism in the Delta, trade, mining, and various types of craftwork such as court singers, itinerant craftsmen, and sailors brought a range of Asiatics, especially Amorites, into MK society. References even exist to Asiatics as servants within Theban households, and ꜥꜣmw are attested at Kahun serving in a number of forms of employment and may even have lived in a camp near the site.[277] From one sampling of 2,600 names appearing on funerary stelae and in other

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[276] Oren 1997b.
[277] Among these texts smaller numbers of Hurrians are also attested. See Luft 1993: 295.

inscriptions during the MK to Second Intermediate Period, for example, 800 were either ꜥꜣmw, were related directly to ꜥꜣmw, or were connected to ꜥꜣmw by their profession.[278] Even though in some cases, as with Asiatics listed on the Kahun papyrus, they were identified as ꜥꜣmw but did not bear Semitic names,[279] this was likely the result of a wide range of possibilities, including the adoption of non-Amorite names by Amorite Asiatics, for which parallels certainly existed in Mesopotamia (see Chapter 3) as well as non-Amorite individuals from Southwest Asia.

Middle Kingdom Egyptian mortuary stela illustrate that many individuals included Asiatics (ꜥꜣmw) within their extended households, be they married in, adopted, or otherwise.[280] In at least one instance, there is evidence of an Asiatic buried like an Egyptian in a coffin at Harageh, which identifies him by inscription as "ꜥꜣmw possessor of reverence."[281] Among stelae from Abydos one Asiatic is described as "hall-keeper of (goods from) Kpny (Byblos)."[282] Such inscriptions reveal that many Asiatics were extensively integrated into Egyptian society in a wide variety of economic positions and often intermarried with Egyptians, with whom they had children.[283]

Transients such as merchants and caravaneers composed a significant element among Asiatics in Egyptian territories in the Delta and the Sinai. The evidence concerning donkey caravan sizes suggests the importance and intensity of caravan traffic along routes through the Levant. Texts from Serabit el-Khadem mention that caravans from the coast and probably from the Delta ranged from 50 to 600 donkeys.[284] Other transient Asiatics are also attested, including depictions of Asiatics in Egypt from the MK in the tomb of Khnumhotep II (tomb no. 3) at Beni Hasan during the reign of Senwosret II (1897–1877 BC; Figure 4.9).[285] These scenes are clear representations of Asiatics (ꜥꜣmw) as evident not only through the depictions of their hairstyles, dress, and accoutrements, but also in the label for the scene: "Arriving on account of the bringing of msdmt, he having brought 37 'ꜥꜣmw."[286]

This is further explained by the text of the document presented by the Egyptian who introduces the group to Khnumhotep, which reads:

[278] Schneider 2003: 335–36; Petrik 2011.
[279] Griffith and Petrie 1898.
[280] Schneider 2003; Mourad 2013.
[281] Engelbach and Gunn 1923: 25, pls. LXXV, I, also LXXIV.
[282] Mourad 2013: 45.
[283] Ibid.: 47.
[284] These texts include references to 600 donkeys (no. 100 W.); 500 (no. 110 W.); 500 with 43 drivers (137 W.); 284 with 20 drivers (no. 114); 200 (no. 112); 50 (no. 412); and 30 drivers for an expedition (nos. 85 W., 106 S., 120 N.).
[285] Newberry 1893: pls. 30 and 38n2. Note that Mourad favors the identification of Khnumhotep III over Khnumhotep II (2014: 73).
[286] Mourad 2014: 74.

4.9 Wall painting of *ꜥꜣmw* in tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan.
Source: Newberry 1893: pl. 28. Public domain

> Regnal year 6 under the Majesty of Horus, Leader of the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khakheperre [Senwosret II]; the number of *ꜥꜣmw* whom the son of the count, Khnumhotep, brought on account of *msdmt*, namely *ꜥꜣm(w)* of *Šw*, number amounting to 37.[287]

The caption for the lead Asiatic identifies him as "'ruler of a foreign land (*ḥḳꜣ ḫꜣswt*), Ibsha (*Jbšꜣ*)."[288] His importance may be further underscored by his retinue of four body guards who brandish a composite bow, two throwsticks, and two spears. Following them are three children, four women, and two more men, one of whom is carrying a composite bow and what appears to be a duck-bill ax. His name has been variously rendered from the Egyptian *Jbša*. However it was vocalized in Egyptian, the name is generally agreed to be Northwest Semitic and arguably linguistically Amorite with straightforward parallels in variants of the Amorite name *Abišu(ḫ)*.[289]

As intriguing as the eyewitness account of the appearance of these individuals is, their presence has drawn considerable speculation. Without engaging in a wholesale reappraisal of these interpretations (many overly imaginative),[290] the safest conclusions are that these Asiatics, many of them Amorite, were moving with a degree of freedom within Egypt, as their unfettered presence reveals, but they were nonetheless required to register their movement between nomes to maintain this privilege.[291] The presence of an armed retinue of four males accompanying Ibsha echoes the armed male ("warrior") burials discussed earlier, potentially underscoring the security concerns of this group, which may have been less relevant to their movement within Egypt than outside of it during this period. Overall, however, the composition is related to a scene of the collection of taxes by Khnumhotep. Consequently, the gazelle and *msdmt* presented by the *ꜥꜣmw* probably should be identified as a payment of

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[287] Ibid.: 72–73; see also Kamrin 2013: 158; Goedicke 1984: 209.
[288] Mourad 2014: 74.
[289] Cp. Streck 2000: 163, §2.26. For other suggestions, see summary in Mourad 2014: 74.
[290] Cohen 2015.
[291] For example, Goedicke 1984: 205.

tax.[292] Thus, Beni Hasan's main value is to illustrate that the movements of foreign Asiatics was documented as these individuals moved between Egypt's nomes during the late MK.

Trading ventures in the Levant, including mining expeditions in the Sinai, emerging maritime trade with Byblos, and a burgeoning overland caravan trade reveal other major avenues supporting social interactions and integration of Asiatics into Egyptian society during the MK. Asiatics played a vital role in both the caravan traffic to the mines of the Sinai as well as in the mines themselves. One Asiatic at Serabit el-Khadem is identified as a household laborer,[293] and men of Retenu, who are from the Levant, are also mentioned in several inscriptions, including an individual named "Khebed, brother of the prince of Retenu" during the reign of Amenemhet III (1843–1797 BC).[294] His name has, likewise, been observed as etymologically Amorite.[295] This, among other types of activity, is suggestive of an almost unavoidable reliance on neighboring Asiatics, particularly Amorites, for Egyptian operations during the MK, especially for their local knowledge of Levantine roads, languages, and customs.

Byblos and Maritime Trade with Egypt

In addition to the evidence from Avaris, there is ample evidence for a robust maritime trade that is suggestive of distinct social networks originating from different points along the Levantine coast and whose members were likely residents of Avaris. The evidence consists, foremost, of imported ceramics.[296] This is borne out by major classes of imported wares such as Tell el-Yehudiyeh Ware juglets[297] and Levantine Painted Ware[298] as well as types such as Canaanite jars. The latter reveal a class of ceramic transport vessel that was not easily, nor likely, transported in bulk via overland caravans, and thus serves as the principal indicator for the existence of a robust maritime trade. The social networks, which were geographically centered around Byblos and the northern Levantine coast, were no less Amorite in their social affinities, as the Execration Texts and the cultural assemblages of these sites reveal. By roughly 1900 BC, the revival of maritime and overland trade constituted a major engine of mobility between the Levant and Egypt, and the corpus of the

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[292] Kamrin 2013: 164–65.
[293] See inscriptions Wadi el-Magharah 24 A and Serabit el-Khadem 81, 85 N., 110 W., 163, and 112 in Černý 1955, also pp. 18–19.
[294] Ibid.; for Khebed's inscriptions, see nos. 114, 115 and 120 N, also nos. 85, 87, 92, and 112.
[295] Possibly the Amorite name Ḫabda and its variants, see Streck 2000: 353, §5.81.
[296] Aston 2002.
[297] Aston and Bietak 2012.
[298] Bagh 2013.

archaeological evidence for maritime trade with the Levant during the latter half of the MK is considerable. Traded goods included cedar and related timber byproducts, such as oils.[299] Additional lines of evidence for trade include stone anchors, cylinder seals depicting boats, and the corpus of traded goods, including agricultural and horticultural produce, woods, oils, resins, unguents – as suggested by small ceramic transport vessels – and wine.

Imported ceramics excavated at Avaris serve as a bellwether of trade relations. In particular, the ceramics from phases G/4–1, arguably belonging to the nineteenth century BC and not later,[300] are particularly important. Most conspicuous among imported vessels are the so-called Canaanite commercial jars, though many of these were also produced in Egypt. The reappearance of jars of Levantine origin points to a revival of the wine, olive oil, and resin industries that made their way to ports on the coast for shipment to Egypt, resurrecting a trade with Egypt in the same commodities begun during the OK. Along with these, an abundance of small piriform juglets and other zoomorphic vessels of what is known as Tell el-Yehudiyeh Ware were now shipped.[301] While remarks concerning these vessels are principally focused on their appearance, it is most likely that this group of variously decorated, small juglets bore unguents, perfumes, and oils, that were associated with a robust trade in scents.[302] The appearance of Levantine Painted Ware, as at Lisht, also attests to other items shipped from the Levantine coast.[303] Petrographic studies of imported Levantine ceramics reveal that the bulk of this pottery assemblage originated in the northern Levant and not the southern Levant.[304] This suggests that the series of ports up the Levantine coast were of secondary importance as markets themselves, and that they developed as markets only thereafter, which studies of the settlement pattern of the coastal plain clearly indicate.[305]

Southern Levantine ports appear to have functioned as part of a network of harbors supporting the maritime route between the northern Levant and Egypt. A range of Egyptian ceramics also appears at Levantine sites and provides evidence for this trade even during the early MK, albeit at only an incipient stage.[306] However, late MK dates for Egyptian ceramic imports at

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[299] Marcus 2002.
[300] See Höflmayer, Kamlah, Sader, et al. 2016. The supposed hiatus inserted into the Middle Kingdom occupation of area F/I is likely far too long and among other synchronisms, as highlighted by Höflmayer et al., has contributed to an unnecessary lowering of the date for the stratigraphic sequence.
[301] Kaplan 1980; Bietak 1987.
[302] Nigro 2003.
[303] Arnold, Arnold, and Allen 1995.
[304] Cohen-Weinberger and Goren 2004: 83. In contrast to earlier studies such as McGovern and Harbottle 1997.
[305] Cohen 2002.
[306] Forstner-Müller and Kopetzky 2009.

Ifshar (Tel Hefer), for northern Levantine ceramics and Egyptian seals at Ashkelon are all illustrative of the extent of this trade with coastal markets within the framework of Levantine trade with Egypt that reached its peak during the late MK.[307]

A key observation for considering the reestablishment of maritime trade is the points of origin for this process. Fundamentally, this entails the locus of shipbuilding, namely the coast of the northern Levant, where timber, the central resource for shipbuilding, was located. Despite the appearance of coastal settlements such as Ashkelon, Jaffa, Nami, Akko, and others between Egypt and Byblos, these centers did not possess the means for exciting maritime trade. Their initial participation, not to mention their participation thereafter, was entirely at the mercy of the engines of this trade at either end of the network – Egypt's economic power or Byblos's timber reserves – but, most significantly, the northern Levantine coast. In this light, arguments concerning the potential indigenous factors behind early MBA trade and the existence of native political upstarts likely overestimate the economic contribution the southern Levant provided at this stage. Neither the major goods of the initial trade nor the mechanisms for that trade were present in the southern Levant during the early MB I (2000–1900 BC). Rather, the development of trade with the south depended on exogenous influences, particularly thru-traffic along the coast and overland that picked up only after MK military intervention subsided. Consequently, while the evidence for maritime activity along the Levantine coast during the early MBA has increased in recent years,[308] the early focus of this trade was restricted, particularly to the northern Levantine coast, fundamentally as a result of the location of timber reserves and related products, but also possibly due to its role in accessing Anatolian and Mesopotamian goods.

Byblos, on the coast of Lebanon, provides the clearest basis for both understanding and dating the revival of maritime trade and contact with Egypt during the early MBA. The trade route, which was established during the OK, has been aptly referred to as the "Byblos run,"[309] was probably revived in the wake of Amenemhet II's (1929–1895 BC) activity in the region.[310] Thus, the bulk of the evidence for its operation falls in the late MK.[311] Among the raw materials borne by this trade was cedar from Lebanon, known as 'ash wood in Egyptian,[312] signaling an interest by Egyptian pharaohs to rebuild ties with Byblos.

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[307] Marcus, Porath, Schiestl, et al. 2008; Cohen-Weinberger and Goren 2004: 83.
[308] For discussion of maritime trade during the MB I, see Marcus 2002.
[309] Stager 1992: 40–41.
[310] Marcus 2007.
[311] Ibid.: 173; Flammini 2010: 158.
[312] Davies 1995: 149.

The archaeology of MBA Byblos reveals both its local Levantine character and a considerable degree of emulation or adoption of Egyptian material culture. The site's clear conformity with local cultic architectural traditions is evident in a range of *in antis* temple types, including the Chapelle orientale, the Temple à escalier, and the Baalat Gebal ("Lady of Byblos") temple, the last of which appears to be a version of the double direct-axis temple, where two cellas shared a partition wall,[313] similar to one known at Mari. Speaking to a degree of negotiation between local and Egyptian traditions is a building referred to as the Temple of the Obelisks. With dozens of obelisks on its north, west, and south sides, it was constructed atop the remains of the earlier temple following the destruction of the site in the late third millennium BC.[314] While the fact that a number of these stones are carved in obelisk shapes certainly reveals a degree of Egyptian influence, they are more appropriately identified with the standing-stone tradition prevalent in the Levant and in Mesopotamia from the third millennium,[315] revealing once again the locally mediated variants of well-known archetypes. Votives buried within the temple's grounds included nearly 1,500 bronze male figurines, some overlain in gold and silver. Wearing what resembles the Egyptian white crown, these figures are identified with the god Reshef, owing to an Egyptian inscription on one the standing stones. A variety of offerings were buried within the temple's grounds, including daggers and fenestrated axes, ornately decorated and gilded.[316] Interestingly, the association with Reshef as well as the types of offerings may point to martial concerns in line with other aspects of early MBA ritual, namely the so-called warrior burials of the period.

The appearance of the odd item associated with long-distance trade among southern Levantine sites during the first century of the second millennium also suggests a revival of the southern Levant's principal role in hosting waystations and harbors, which gradually developed into small secondary markets for goods. Ashkelon began as a small, fortified settlement during the MBA. Outside of the presence of Cypriot wares traded all along the coast, and some sherds of Kamares Ware, the principal evidence for the receipt of more substantial goods from both directions of the trade is Egyptian *zir* storejars, found in later deposits of the MBA moat at Ashkelon, which are dated to the Thirteenth Dynasty (from 1786 BC).[317] Yet an OA seal has also turned up in MBA contexts at Ashkelon, albeit slightly later,[318] and should be taken as evidence not necessarily of the presence of OA merchants but rather of the

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[313] Sala 2014: 43–47.
[314] Joukowsky 1997: 392.
[315] Sala 2014: 44–47.
[316] Aruz, Benzel, and Evans 2008: 52–55.
[317] Bietak, Kopetzky, Stager, et al. 2008.
[318] Alizadeh 2008.

growth of markets, and possibly the existence of a trinket trade. At the heart of this maritime trade is, nevertheless, the evidence for the resettlement of coastal communities, which were initially ports of call along the route between Lebanon and the Delta of Egypt, some of which then evolved into destinations in their own right, in particular where they offered access to important destinations inland.[319]

Analogous contemporaneous evidence for the role of long-distance trade is offered from southern Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. Around 1900 BC, Dilmun (in Bahrain) established a trade colony with storage facilities about 400 km to its north at the doorstep of Mesopotamia, on the island of Failaka, which itself was built on the remains of an Ur III merchant enclave. Sealings of the so-called Dilmun Type, which are attested from the reign of Gungunum of Larsa (1932–1906 BC), appear thereafter from Eshnunna to the Indus. It was also during this period that Dilmun's rulers, who are identified as Amorite, established a royal cemetery at A'ali.[320] From the end of this phase, these burial mounds yielded inscriptions of its rulers bearing Amorite names,[321] further underscoring the participation of individuals who identified as Amorites in long-distance trade, also with the east.

THE ROLE OF THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

The foundation and expansion of urban centers are historically contingent processes. This is largely because settlement floruits are often tied to environmental changes, political endeavors, territorial expansions by polities, or the emergence of new dynasties. It is difficult to be certain how many centers that would later become prominent seats of Amorite rule during the late OB Period were founded during the early MBA, but among available sources the rise of Amorite dynasties constitutes a significant cultural moment across the Fertile Crescent. The available evidence points to an impressive phase of foundations and restorations from southern Mesopotamia to the Levant during the first half of the MBA, continuing into the early eighteenth century BC. This did not entail de novo foundations in all cases, and thus some existing towns were revitalized and expanded as they became integrated into trade networks, while others became the seats of emergent Amorite dynasties. The unifying context behind these processes was, however, the role that urbanism played as the context for the cultivation of an oikoumene during the MBA, which exhibited a distinct and yet unified character among Amorite states.

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[319] Burke 2011b: 65–67.
[320] Laursen and Steinkeller 2017: 65.
[321] Marchesi 2017.

While Mesopotamia's irrigation-based agriculture and the Levant's rainfed plains and uplands formed the basis for substantially different economies, a resurgence of long-distance, interregional exchange networks served as a social leveling mechanism, providing new opportunities for the economic integration of upper Mesopotamia's populations and a foundation of settlements in rural territories across Mesopotamia and the Levant. Although pastoralism returned to some marginal regions after 1900 BC, horticulture and viticulture also expanded in the southern Levant, with new areas of production, first in the coastal plain and Great Rift Valley, and eventually into the highlands. With a higher percentage of the region's populations living among these urban centers, the influence of emerging dynasties also grew. Much like Renaissance-period states, the urban centers of these emerging states fostered competition and emulation among their elites, shaping and further propagating a suite of shared traditions.[322]

Mesopotamia

Most notable among the urban centers of southern Mesopotamia is Babylon, which if correctly identified with what seems to be an Akkadian Period town by the name, only became a major town during the reign of the dynasty's founder, Sumuabum (1894–1881 BC), whose years 1 and 2 also reference the construction of Babylon's fortification wall.[323] Such endeavors would most likely be among the early efforts of kings whose territorial aspirations might lead them to pursue expansion, requiring that they secured their own capitals at the outset of this process.[324]

The establishment of Shubat Enlil in the Jazira as Shamshi-Adad's capital, though built on the remains of the earlier site known as Shekhna, would qualify as a similarly new foundation within the archaic landscape of the Jazira around 1800 BC.[325] As riparian communities along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers grew during the late third and early second millennia, owing in large part to the effects of earlier migration, the role played by these urban centers in this process expanded disproportionately along with their interest in the acquisition of neighboring territories. With the return of rainfall around 1900 BC, the old, pastoralist-centered textile economy could be expanded and exchange corridors across this region secured and exploited. It is unsurprising, therefore, that efforts to exploit pasturelands in the arid margins that

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[322] Ilan 1995a.
[323] http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=sumuabum.
[324] It should be of little surprise that Ishbi-Erra, for example, is recorded as rebuilding the wall of Isin during his twelfth year, roughly at the time of Ibbi-Sin's death. http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_ishbi-erra.
[325] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 311; Villard 1995: 873–74.
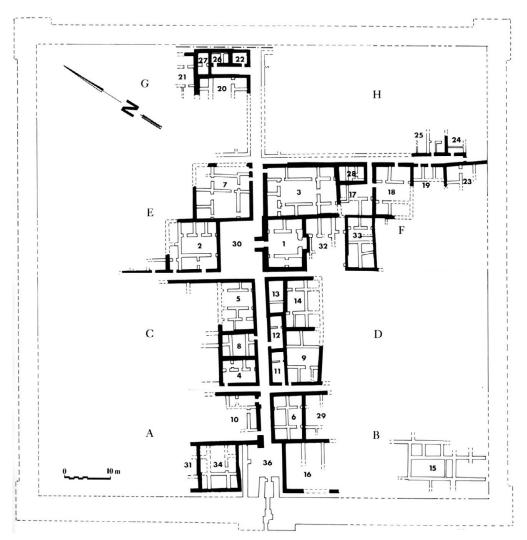
stretched from northern Mesopotamia to the eastern Levant were led by kings of Mari, Assur, and Ekallatum such as Yaḫdun-Lim and Shamshi-Adad.

Small towns were also established in Mesopotamia during this era of emerging territorial rivalries, serving as military outposts and mercantile waystations. Unlike in the Levant, historical sources in Mesopotamia provide some context for these developments, though they are often read purely as political and military developments. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Eshnunna's expansion under Ipiq-Adad II and his successor, Naram-Sin, to the north, east, and west from the Diyala was a major event.[326] Among the results of this expansion were the foundations of a number of towns, such as Harradum and Shaduppum.[327] Similarly, Yaḫdun-Lim (r. 1820–1810 BC) expanded his territory into the Jazira, established control over nearby states at Tuttul and Terqa along the Euphrates, and founded sites such as Dur-Yaḫdun-Lim.[328] In turn, his efforts were followed by those of Shamshi-Adad, who also constructed the fortresses of Dur-Addu at Dur-Samsi-Addu in the west, near Tell Ahmar, a powerful territorial incursion in the face of the kingdom of Yamḫad.[329] While these events are set late in the nineteenth and early eighteenth centuries, they illustrate the context in and manner by which such foundations were undertaken. They may be viewed, therefore, as part of a continued trend of expansionist efforts by earlier kings such as Sumula-el of Babylon (1880–1845 BC) in southern Mesopotamia already during the early nineteenth century, which included the construction of a town known as Dur-Sumula-el.[330] Consequently, similar efforts were already underway earlier in the nineteenth century. In contrast to the re-extensification of agropastoralism into parts of the zone of uncertainty that was also in progress, these endeavors placed new settlements between major towns, often along the roads between them, contributing to a process of settlement infilling, much as has been identified during the second half of the MBA in the Levant.

While few of the towns resulting directly from such territorial expansion are available for closer study, Harradum (Khirbet ed-Diniyeh) has been extensively excavated and published. It is located along the west bank of the Euphrates River south of and downstream from Mari and the burial grounds of Baghouz, and just upstream from those at Shuweimiyeh, and Usiyeh.[331] This town was principally dated to the second half of the MBA, and its orthogonal layout exposes the planning that went into its layout (Figure 4.10). The town featured monuments such as several direct-axis

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[326] Charpin 2004: 129–32.
[327] Kepinski 2013; Bāqir 1959.
[328] RIME 4.6.8.1; Charpin 2004: 135–42.
[329] Charpin, Edzard, and Stol 2004: 143–52, 59.
[330] Charpin 2004: 94–96.
[331] Kepinski 2012.

4.10 Plan of the fortress town of Harradum along the Euphrates. For a direct-axis temple from the site, see Figure 5.9.
Illustration by author

temples (see no. 1 on Figure 4.10), which may belong to Adad and Ishtar, whose temples are mentioned among texts from the site. Documentary sources from the site also mention a *kārum*. Texts are associated with private houses and the temple, and they reveal that the town's inhabitants were engaged in trade of "grain, dates, wood, cattle, sesame oil … sheep, wool, and hides" as well as "tin, aromatic woods and slaves" connecting pastoralists and communities both up and downstream.[332] This is remarkable given the relative size

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[332] See also Kepinski 2005.

and dependence of such a town on other settlements, illustrating even the role of such small sites in broader networks of exchange.

While the site's excavators have suggested an economic focus for its foundation,[333] others have observed that its construction was simply a military endeavor like many others.[334] That it was valuable and perhaps strategic is evident, of course, from the middle of the eighteenth century, when the town was taken by Babylon. Yet the manner in which politics, economics, and social identity served related agendas makes it more difficult to simply accept that the site's layout and the speed with which it was constructed should serve as the primary indication of its sole function as a fortress. The distinction, albeit subtle, is all the more significant since, as discussed earlier, fostering trade served economic, political, and social ends. Just as the lives of those interacting within such settlements were entangled, so were the motives for founding them. Thus, an outpost – settled by one set of inhabitants as part of a trade diaspora and garrisoned with troops, which resulted from one set of political aspirations – could be absorbed into the military, political, and economic expansion of another state, giving rise to what was likely a very socially heterogenous community. In light of such observations, it is particularly interesting that Harradum was inhabited by mercenary units during the late OB Period,[335] and that this situation appears to have played out among a host of such fortress communities by the end of the period.[336]

The Northern Levant and Canaan

Byblos and Ebla serve as our primary exemplars of MBA urban centers in the northern Levant, representing, respectively, coastal and inland centers. Both appear to have been rebuilt in a short period after their destruction during the late third millennium, and they were likely designed and rebuilt in one moment as part of an intentional plan.[337] The major elements of the these towns included an acropolis that hosted the palace and temples, surrounding sacred areas with their individual temples in the lower town, all of which were enclosed by massive ramparted fortifications punctuated by massive, fortified gates.[338] The traditional centers of the northern Levant such as Ebla, Qatna, and Byblos changed little from the third millennium BC and the earlier

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[333] Kepinski-Lecomte 1992: 32.
[334] Charpin 2004: 354–55.
[335] Richardson 2019a: 19.
[336] Richardson 2019b: 226–27, and references therein.
[337] Pinnock 2001: 22.
[338] Ibid.

elements, particularly the fortifications, usually defined the limits of their growth.[339]

The fortifications of the earlier cities represent massive endeavors in construction and earth moving, which more than any other element were truly fixed,[340] effectively defining their urban landscapes during the MBA. Ebla's fortifications (see Figure 5.11), like those of Byblos, reveal a cultural approach to warfare and defense that stood in a long chain of developments drawing upon third millennium traditions,[341] such as the *Kranzhügeln* ("wreath-shaped mounds") of upper Mesopotamia.[342] But even more so, their constructions, as monumental endeavors, find parallels in the references of OB rulers to the construction of contemporaneous fortification systems in southern Mesopotamia, suggesting veritably identical concerns in the defense of their communities and projections of authority. Both the reuse of third-millennium fortifications and earlier structural foundations during the MBA at Ebla, as at many other sites, carried with them the implicit appropriation of the traditions of earlier rulers. Such acts were widespread during the early MBA in the Levant and, as with analogous practices in Mesopotamia, they effectively contributed to the legitimacy of nascent rulers who embraced the "reinvention" of urban traditions during this period, the success of which is fully evident during second half of the MBA.[343]

The similar layouts of other MBA communities in the Levant also suggest that not only did third-millennium conceptual frameworks for urban planning shape town planning, but that both new foundations and the expansion of settlements during the MBA were approached in an analogous fashion.[344] This is evident, in particular, in the southern Levant where de novo settlements of the period adopted both similar approaches to fortification construction and the urban layouts that accompanied them. The palace and primary sanctuary were situated in an elevated position relative to the remaining structures, often in the center of the settlement. In Mesopotamia, Mari's OB layout was clearly shaped by earlier considerations regarding the circumference of its rampart defenses.[345] In the Levant in addition to Ebla, Byblos is an excellent example of the influence of the earlier town's plan on that of the second millennium BC.[346] However, new foundations during the MBA – or at least those lacking

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[339] Ibid.: 26.
[340] Burke 2008: 198–204 and references therein.
[341] Ibid.: 78–81.
[342] Meyer 2011.
[343] Feldman 2007: 52.
[344] See also Matthiae 2013a: 349.
[345] Burke 2008: 171–75.
[346] Ibid.: 192–97; see also Pinnock 2007.

continuous occupation from the third millennium – such as Hazor,[347] reveal a general adoption of the tradition of a rectilinear plan, which prevailed among new foundations from about 1800 BC, likely accounting for advancements in siege tactics during this period.[348] The same process appears to have occurred in northern Mesopotamia where Yakaltum (Tell Munbaqa) and Shubat Enlil (Tell Leilan),[349] for example, were rebuilt with roughly rectilinear plans after a settlement hiatus, abandoning the more organic elliptical layouts of the early MBA and third millennium.

The evidence from Ebla and contemporaneous MBA settlements therefore permit us to identify the constraining principles that contributed to such similarities among their layouts, revealing functional but also cultural preferences for the locations of monumental structures and their institutions that can be traced back to the Early Bronze Age.[350] Where prior constraints did not exist, organization appears to have centered on an adaptation of a legacy of planning, demonstrating a preference for the upwind location of palaces and temples among new foundations, a pattern that clearly continued throughout the Levant during the rest of the second millennium BC, as at Alalakh and Hazor, but even in Mesopotamia like at Shubat Enlil. Ultimately, the locations selected for the rebuilding of MBA institutions suggest a desire by ruling elites to associate their dynastic efforts with the locations of those that belonged to their predecessors and therefore with the legitimacy perceived to be associated with the traditional real estate of authority. While easily overlooked, these governing factors reveal an adaptation of, instead of a rejection of or indifference to, such traditions by MBA communities and the elites who ruled them. Together these aspects fundamentally permit the recognition of MBA urbanism as a renaissance of third-millennium urban planning, and that these traditions were entirely absent in the southern Levant at the end of the third millennium.

While our archaeological knowledge of the northern Levant in the early second millennium is relatively limited outside of urban centers such as Ebla and Byblos, the settlement pattern in the early MBA in Canaan reveals the return of urbanism concomitant with the rekindling of long-distance trade networks.[351] The collapse of trade networks during the late third millennium along with the greatly depopulated landscape of the southern Levant created immense opportunity along the maritime and overland routes once political and economic circumstances in the northern Levant improved around 1900 BC, after an initial phase of MK military intervention. Indeed, it is during this early phase that ports are, once again,

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[347] Burke 2008.
[348] Ibid.: 81.
[349] Ibid.: 175–76, 81–82.
[350] Pinnock 2007.
[351] Cohen 2014.

in evidence along the Levantine coast from Byblos south to Egypt's Pelusiac branch of the Nile. The period is marked by the appearance of a number of Amorite rulers seated among a handful of newly established centers arrayed along the Levant's main trade and communication corridors.

While socioeconomic changes were evidently gradual from the late third millennium in the northern Levant, in the southern Levant they were dramatic. This was no doubt due to the fact that population density had so precipitously declined during the late third millennium. Urbanism therefore created the social context for exposure to the emerging *oikoumene* since the effects of long-distance trade were most intensely experienced at these nodes within these growing mercantile networks. A number of features within these urban environments, such as fortifications, palaces, temples, and burial customs, all of which increasingly reflected a shared set of traditions – that resembled most closely traditions more common in the northern Levant and Mesopotamia – can only be satisfactorily explained through robust mechanisms of socioeconomic and political exchange that included the expansion of states as well as merchant enclaves and military communities.

Had the southern Levant's new centers been simply founded by local populations during the early MBA their foundations should reveal initial phases of material culture bearing much greater ties to local late third-millennium traditions, from ceramics to artistic traditions. However, the changes are stark, sudden, and conspicuous, and include many exogenous elements. As such, they arguably resulted from both the aggregation of local populations around nodes in these emergent trade networks as local groups sought participation in social and economic exchanges taking place within these communities (e.g., Aphek and Megiddo). The foundation of entirely new centers along these routes feature attributes suggestive of external influence, even if with intensive participation by local populations (e.g., Ashkelon, Akko, Tel Dan, and Hazor).[352] It is therefore unsurprising given the character of this emergent *oikoumene* that there is no evidence that local groups were excluded from these networks, but rather that they readily participated is evident from the extremely limited evidence available to suggest the protracted coexistence of cultural assemblages assigned to the late third millennium (i.e., EB IV) and early second millennium (i.e., MB I).[353] The characteristics of early MBA settlement in the Jordan Valley, for example, also exposes their connections to northern Levantine traditions.[354] While some cultural elements argue for a degree of social continuity,[355] the fundamental associations of the

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[352] See Yasur-Landau 2019.
[353] Dever 1975; Gonen 2001.
[354] Maeir 2010: 175–77.
[355] Cohen 2009: 6–8.

introduction of foreign traditions reveal that exogenous influences were sub-stantively at work within Canaan during the early MBA, particularly well along by 1900 BC.

While the mechanics of this process can be inferred on the basis of the archaeological evidence for trade, the region's settlement pattern permits a nuanced articulation of Canaan's political and economic revival. The earliest phases of MBA settlement in the southern Levant can be viewed as an evolutionary process, thanks in large part to syntheses of the archaeological data for settlement during the period identified as MB I.[356] By employing the ceramic sequence for the early MBA at Tel Aphek, inland from Jaffa, the development of the local ceramic sequence provides a basis for a more nuanced perspective of the evolution of settlement during this period, particularly to settlement in the coastal plain, where its ceramic assemblage provides the most complete developmental sequence. The results permit a four-phase sequencing of settlement of a substantial part of the early MBA. Although in the absence of radiocarbon dates for this sequence we cannot be sure how long each of these phases lasted, for the sake of understanding the relationships of these phases to contemporaneous developments, in the discussion that follows these phases are treated as roughly thirty-year units, which is likely only off by a little more than a decade or two. Nevertheless, the relative sequence represented by these phases reveal a gradual intensification of settlement in the coastal plain from ca. 1920 BC to 1800 BC.
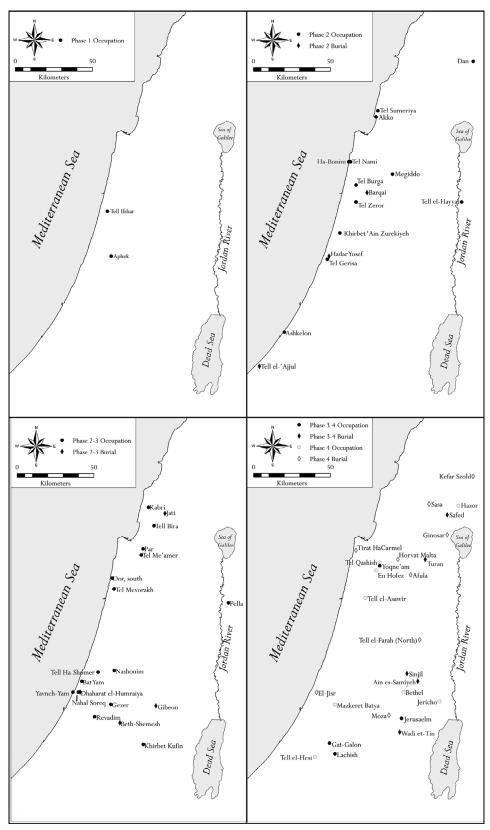
The appearance of Ifshar in Phase 1 of this settlement sequence (ca. 1920–1890 BC) attests to the role played by Egypt in the incipient stages of the early MBA (Figure 4.11). Extensive remains of Egyptian ceramics are present and point to social and economic ties with Egypt.[357] Recent radiocar-bon assays suggest that its earliest phase (A) is dated to the late twentieth to early nineteenth century, and these dates correlate with those from sites further north, such as Tell el-Burak in Lebanon.[358] Imports from the Akkar Plain in Lebanon, as well as from the northern Levant and Egypt, reveal the extent of the site's ties in this period. This evidence also exposes the primacy of maritime exchange in the process of the revival of trade through the region, as reflected by coastal communities such as Akko and Ashkelon, which were settled no later than phase 2 (after ca. 1890 BC). These were thereafter accompanied by a number of secondary centers in the coastal plain and foothills to the east. The earlier foundations suggested for Akko and Ashkelon, in combination with the data from Byblos,[359] point to the maritime basis for the origins of these

[356] Cohen 2002.
[357] Marcus, Porath, Schiestl, et al. 2008.
[358] Marcus 2013: 202.
[359] Stager 2002.

4.11 Maps of four phases of early Middle Bronze Age settlement (ca. 1920–1800 BC) along the coastal plain of the southern Levant, showing founding phases for each settlement. Illustration by Amy Karoll

communities, followed by the development of overland caravan traffic and the emergence of secondary centers after them.[360]
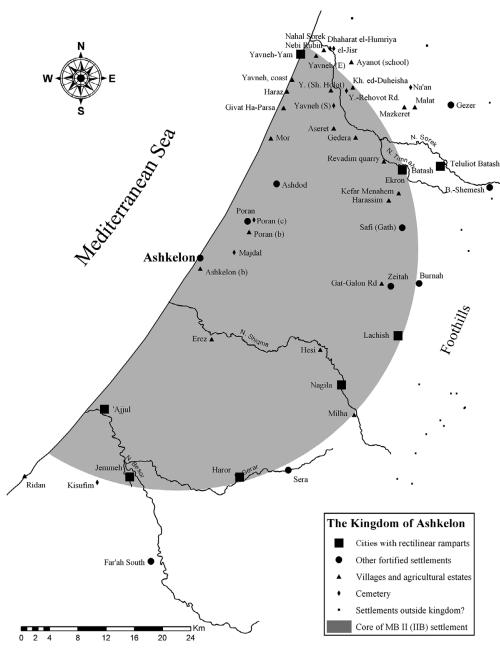
Between phases 2 and 3 (ca. 1860 BC), other settlements throughout the coastal plain emerged, such as Kabri, Burga, Gerisa, and Yavneh-Yam. Settlement intensified predominantly between the Yarkon River and Ashkelon to its south, with some extension of networks into the hills to the east as reflected primarily in cemetery assemblages there. Phase 3 (ca. 1860–1830 BC) witnessed not only a further intensification of coastal settlement, but additional settlement inland. Settlement along and from the Jordan Valley, for example, is attested at sites such as Pella and Tell el-Hayyat during phases 2 and 3. It was during this period that a significant number of sites were fortified, such as Megiddo. Changes from phases 3 to 4 (from ca. 1830 BC) exhibit a movement toward settlement extensification away from existing centers, in a process frequently referred to as settlement infilling, which continued into the second half of the MBA.

A fairly detailed evolution of settlement around the port of Ashkelon is possible when combined with historical and archaeological data, signaling the foundation of Canaan's largest independent kingdom during the early MBA, which gradually expanded in its influence over the coastal plain through the end of the MBA (Figure 4.12).[361] These data suggest that the site was likely founded by ca. 1890 BC, after the most intensive phase of MK military activity in the Levant, and at roughly the same time as the arrival of Asiatic settlers at Avaris in Egypt.[362] The identification of its rulers as Amorite in this period is unequivocal since the names of three, if not the first three, of its rulers are provided in the Execration Texts.

[360] Although my identification of Ashkelon's MBA polity has been characterized as that of an "agrarian kingdom" (Pierce and Master 2015: 112; Stager 2018: 19–23), I never identified it as such. I maintain that it was initiated by trade and its subsequent growth was supported by a requisite development of agropastoralism in its hinterland for local consumption, not necessarily requiring villages immediately around it (and these are notoriously ephemeral). However, that it was a "commercial kingdom," as Stager suggests, anachronistically retrojects a Phoenician economic model with no evidence for the largescale import of grain by sea as implied by the model. Suggesting that grain was brought from the highlands ignores that long-distance, overland transport of grain was infeasible. Furthermore, there is no evidence that agriculture was extensive in the largely wooded highlands of Canaan in this period. As concerns sand dune coverage around Ashkelon, Stager neglects Koucky's observation that "dune coverage must have been less extensive in antiquity than it is today, especially in the Bronze and Iron Ages" (Koucky 2008: 13).

[361] Burke 2008: 125–35. Despite the fact that the Very Low Chronology continues to be employed in the interpretation of Ashkelon's MBA sequence (see Stager, Schloen, and Voss 2018; also Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008: 215–34, esp. fig. 14.4) and was also employed in Burke 2008, I have abandoned it in favor of the conventional Middle Chronology in this work and in this discussion of Ashkelon's history.

[362] Stager and Voss 2018: 105.

4.12 Map of the settlement pattern around Ashkelon by the eighteenth century BC.
Illustration by author

While it is unclear whether the entirety of Ashkelon was occupied at this stage, settlement may have been confined to the northern mound of only about 5 ha at this time. Doubtlessly, it began even smaller than this (i.e., before 1890 BC) and may have taken decades to reach this size. South of Ashkelon, the port of Tell el-ʿAjjul (ancient Sharuhen?) was also founded during phase 2,

when other sites in the coastal plain north of Ashkelon such as Nami, Burga, Zeror, 'Ain Zurekiyeh, Gerisa, and possibly Poran were first settled. Since many of these are located on the coastal road and did not evidently serve as harbors, overland caravan trade likely played an increasing role in the expansion of Ashkelon itself and its hinterland at this point,[363] a fact overlooked in the excavator's reconstruction of the site's economic orientation as primarily maritime.

During phase 3 (ca. 1890–1860 BC), Ashkelon was first fortified with the construction of a freestanding earthen rampart capped by a mudbrick glacis, mudbrick fortifications, and a gate complex, augmented by a rock-cut fosse.[364] These defenses point to the concerns that intensive military activity during the MK might have elicited, to say nothing of concerns regarding northern states with which Ashkelon was in competition. The construction of the mudbrick barrel-vaulted gate of this phase also exposes its association with architectural traditions common throughout the northern Levant and Mesopotamia.[365] It was during this period that a number of sites appeared in its hinterland, and in line with the demographic growth of its countryside. Other major settlements were established to Ashkelon's north along the coast at Yavneh-Yam and Nebi Rubin, reaching as much as 27 ha. These were soon followed by settlements by the end of phase 3 at Gezer and Lachish, if not also Ekron.[366]

At the start of phase 4 (ca. 1830 BC), Ashkelon's northern gate was rebuilt, seemingly after normal wear and tear, and now featured a defensive moat or fosse.[367]Certainly by this phase, Ashkelon's 1,900-meter-long fortifications enclosed an area of approximately 50 ha.[368] That military threats were of limited concern by the end of this phase, especially from Egypt, is indicated by eventual infilling of Ashkelon's moat, which included mud sealings belonging to the Thirteenth Dynasty (i.e., post-1786 BC) and no moat existed thereafter. By the start of the MB II and in keeping with developments across the Fertile Crescent during the eighteenth century, Ashkelon's gate passage reached its widest size.[369] Settlement in the coastal plain from this point on took the form of extensification as new settlements that sprang up around those already established.

The combined evidence from coastal communities such as Byblos and Ashkelon reveal the evolution of settlement during the early MBA resulting

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[363] Burke 2008: 127, 129.
[364] Ashkelon Phase 14, Gate 1. Voss and Stager 2018: 27–41.
[365] Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008: 218–23, fig. 14.6.
[366] Burke 2008: 129, 131.
[367] Ashkelon Phase 13, Gate 2. See Voss and Stager 2018: 41–64; Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008: 224–32, figs. 14.11–12, 14.28.
[368] Burke 2008: 126–27.
[369] Ashkelon Phase 12, Gate 3. See Voss and Stager 2018: 64–87; Stager, Schloen, and Master 2008: 232–34, fig. 14.29.
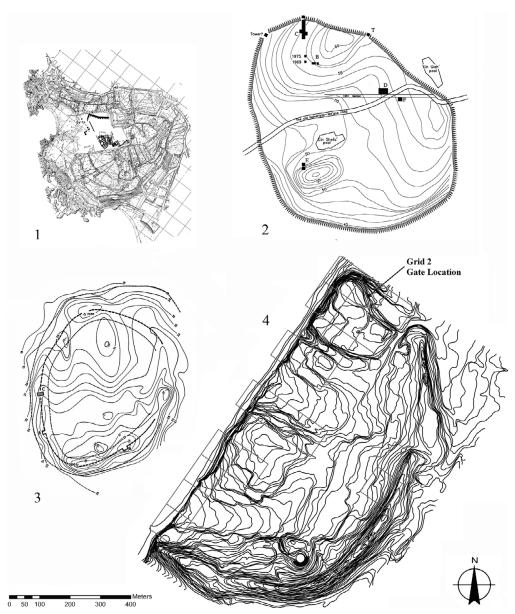
from maritime commerce, coupled with overland caravan traffic that followed in the wake of early MK military intervention. The earliest episode in second millennium settlement is difficult to identify in the southern Levant, and it is not accounted for in the sequence at Tel Aphek, thus suggesting the possible existence of a phase predating phase 1. However, from a period roughly following a peak in MK military activity in the second half of the nineteenth century BC, settlements along the coastal plain highlight the effects of the revival of maritime trade between Egypt, Byblos, and coastal Syria. The intensification of the maritime route that likely contributed to Ashkelon's foundation appears to have also contributed to the emergence of secondary harbors, and was rapidly followed by settlement among sites in the coastal plain that are sufficiently distant from the coast to reveal the emergence of the overland route to Egypt. This phenomenon, which is also suggested by the evidence from Avaris, is once again indicative of at least two distinct networks of long-distance trade that comport well with the fractured, factionalized, and competitive environment that characterized early second millennium exchange. Later penetration of inland territories along wadi basins reveals an emerging exploitation of the foothills and highlands of Canaan for what likely constituted the integration of a trade in wine and oils along these dendritic networks.[370]

A range of factors suggests that the most conspicuous of cultural changes in the southern Levant in the early second millennium were a byproduct of a change in its social landscape, namely the presence of – at least initially – highly transient groups with relations to regions to the north who introduced, reintroduced, or made popular traditions that were not simply dormant, but rather were entirely absent. First, settlement layouts – to the extent that we understand them, as previously mentioned – are those of contemporaneous settlements in upper Mesopotamia and the northern Levant and, at a minimum, they reveal a prevailing interest in imitation of northern traditions.[371] Village life of the late third millennium in the southern Levant did not offer a template for the urban organization, urban institutions, or their traditions, most of which bear hallmarks of northern Levantine and Mesopotamian traditions. The revival of urbanism and its institutions was not therefore facilitated by an appeal to memories of traditions of urbanism more than half a millennium old. A review of conspicuous and central elements of material culture that bear clear traces of influences outside of Canaan, such as urban plans and fortifications, temple architecture, and burial customs, reveals the connection of the spread of these traditions by mobile individuals during the early MBA, such as royal emissaries, merchants, and mercenaries.

[370] Stager 2001: 360–62.
[371] Burke 2008: 80–81.

4.13   Plans of early Middle Bronze Age centers of the Levant's coastal plain: 1) Byblos, 2) Kabri, 3) Burga, and 4) Ashkelon.
Illustration by author

The first element to an exogenous identification for influence in the south is that exemplars of early second millennium urban planning in Canaan are fundamentally arrayed along the coastal plain and bear structural similarities with northern Levantine settlements: Kabri, Akko, Burga, Gerisa, Yavneh-Yam, and Ashkelon (Figure 4.13). They are, arguably, the most conspicuous products of the very maritime trade that contributed to their foundations. Following the initial small and unfortified foundations that likely underlay

them, as settlements they were planned and laid out in fairly short duration. Although a limited amount of labor may have been required for the construction of their first defenses and we cannot be certain of its composition,[372] this labor was organized and its requirements evoke a social complexity that was entirely absent in the region for centuries.[373] If a return of this level of social complexity were an endogenous, Canaanite phenomenon, then a handful of urban centers in Transjordan that persisted into the late third millennium, such as Khirbet Iskander or Khirbet Iktanu, should have played a clear role in these developments. The settlement patterns, however, do not bear this out, and the focus in the early MBA was no longer on agropastoralism in marginal zones of the southern Levant that these old towns engaged in before they were abandoned late in the third millennium. Rather, the focus was on new coastal communities. As there is no evident need to suggest coercion of labor, given the opportunities generated in these new communities in support of a burgeoning maritime traffic, it is likely that local populations, first in the coastal plain and gradually into the highlands, were increasingly drawn into life within these settlements, as the heterogeneous constituencies of other MBA communities in the Near East reveal.[374] Thus, the composition of these communities was not homogenous, neither exclusively composed of foreign merchants nor that of locals simply emulating foreign traditions. Rather the conditions created within these new communities created economic opportunities that yielded, first and foremost, the social interactions and entanglements of the types attested at Kanesh and almost anywhere trade enclaves appeared in this period.

To be sure, there is a consensus that the small local population persisted in Canaan at the end of the third millennium, however greatly diminished from its peak in the mid-third millennium. This population was, however, a fraction of what the population was during the MBA, even in the MB I. A persistent local population cannot account for the demographic growth that accompanied an increase in total number of sites and growth in their size that took place during the MBA. Dated population estimates would range from more than 106,500 at 250 persons per hectare on more than 426 settled hectares to as few as 42,600 at 100 persons per hectare.[375] Either way, the population was higher than the late third millennium low, possibly around 15,000, which was much lower than the EB III peak of 60,000 (discussed in Chapter 3).

Foreign populations also account for the inspirations evident in the southern Levant's cultural development during the MB I. Largely in reaction to earlier,

[372] Ibid.: 146–52.
[373] For various plausible scenarios based on contemporaneous approaches attested in textual sources, see ibid.: 153–55.
[374] Stager 2001; Stager 2002.
[375] Although in desperate need of revision, see Broshi and Gophna 1986.

unnuanced characterizations of cultural change, such as the "Amorite hypothesis," efforts to reinterpret southern Levantine archaeological contexts have employed counter narratives seeking to emphasize local agency as principally, if not exclusively, responsible for the notable changes associated with MBA traditions.[376] Among these are efforts to differentiate Mesopotamian and Levantine, particularly southern Levantine, settlement systems in the study of MBA settlement landscapes.[377] The primary differences, namely scale and subsistence patterns share widespread consensus. Levantine settlements were not only much smaller than their Mesopotamian counterparts, but also relied principally upon more intensive rainfall that permitted a more diverse economy that featured, among other things, horticulture and viticulture alongside pastoralism. Other efforts hinge on the emphasis of indigenous developments that relied, at best, on emulation of elite culture in the north, but did not substantively require the presence of groups with northern origins in Canaan, explicitly avoiding reference to contributions by Amorite groups or phenomena otherwise associated with Amorites.[378]

What these approaches share is an emphasis on local agency as the impetus behind developments in the southern Levant at the start of the second millennium BC. However, models of the diffusion of technologies appear to neglect the movement of actual individuals, with little consideration of the social and economic mechanisms that brought about the changes observed. In some instances, the changes are entirely relegated to the background, simply emphasizing continuity in the narrative. The late third and early second millennia reveal starkly different traditions, however, across nearly every aspect of the spectrum of material culture that, irrespective of slight degrees of continuity, require explanation. These narratives fail, therefore, to provide a nuanced historical or cultural explanation for the sudden change in indigenous culture that took place around the twentieth century that bears remarkable similarity and was sometimes identical with cultural expressions in the northern Levant and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, persistence and continuity of third-millennium traditions do not constitute an argument against exogenous influences when influences were present over at least two centuries. The two are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, this was a long-term process that ebbed with a wide range of social agents from the late third into the second millennium. No single social, economic, or political explanation, including indigenous explanations, will adequately addresses them. Appeals to inchoate and vague *longue durée* processes that prefer to emphasize continuity, unwittingly ignore that places such as the Levant were constantly within the sphere

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[376] Cohen 2014: 458–59; Homsher and Cradic 2017; Homsher and Cradic 2018.
[377] See, with bibliography, Falconer 2016.
[378] Tubb 2009.

of influences of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and other actors in the eastern Mediterranean. Although scenarios that account for interactions and entanglements between locals and foreign merchants and their relations provide a fruitful basis for understanding social change in Canaan in the early second millennium, in light of the evidence it is simply impossible to ignore that during this process third-millennium southern Levantine traditions were fundamentally replaced.

Thus, despite efforts to elevate narratives of indigenous efforts in the reestablishment of urbanism in the southern Levant, the impetus appears to be largely driven by exogenous factors, namely the revival of trade routes along the coast, through the coastal plain, and along the major routes through the Jezreel and Huleh valleys. Exogenous factors played an unequivocally crucial role in this process, providing not only the inspiration, but likely a significant population among the earliest inhabitants of these new centers, particularly the largest of these that were located along major trade corridors. This is illustrated by both the nature of cultural assemblages of settlements in Canaan, but also the relatively rapid growth of the region's population, which accompanied an extensification of settlement.

AN AMORITE *OIKOUMENE*

The foregoing reconstruction of emerging trade networks and broad security concerns during the early second millennium exposes the important role of urban environments in the social encounters that shaped the period. These social encounters cultivated what Glenn Schwartz has identified as the emergence of an *oikoumene*,[379] building upon the works of Jean-Marie Durand and others. Even more to the point, Lauren Ristvet has referred to this specifically as the Amorite *oikoumene*.[380] Like Schwartz, she references the shared employment of OB for diplomacy and participation in shared approaches to warfare, while noting that "Amorite states ... actively constructed a shared culture, often adapting Southern Mesopotamian imagery or institutions to a Northern Mesopotamian or Syrian milieu," despite the fact that "political fragmentation was the norm."[381] Although these discussions primarily appear in the context of the eighteenth century, this *oikoumene* developed during the first two centuries of the second millennium in the context of the rapid changes within urban landscapes from southern Mesopotamia to Egypt. This was the setting of royal patronage, elite emulation, and intermarriage that fundamentally embodied these traditions.

[379] Schwartz 2013a.
[380] Durand 1992; Ristvet 2012: 46; Schwartz 2013a.
[381] Ristvet 2012: 36.

Royal Patronage

As outlined previously, the early MBA witnessed a substantial increase in the foundation of new states, the revival of older centers, and the establishment of a number of smaller, new communities, as trade expanded and increasing agropastoral exploitation of marginal zones contributed to territorial extensification. During this urban renaissance, rulers found inspiration for their legitimation from earlier forms, adapting them to their efforts toward legitimation, as discussed earlier. Consequently, urban planning and the accompanying fortifications and requisite institutions, of which they were patrons, shared common points of inspiration, a fact hardly surprising given the evidence for the corridors through which trade, emissaries, and military campaigns across Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt operated. In one sense, many of these new foundations, in particular in the Amorite west, might be regarded as colonial endeavors, branches from established polities in the northern Levant and possibly parts of Mesopotamia, which is one common outcome of trade diasporas.[382]

Textual sources reveal that royal patronage played a crucial role in the foundation of Amorite states. This is especially clear through the year names of Amorite founding figures. Gungunum of Larsa, for example, celebrates not only the construction and gifting of objects to temples, but the construction of canals, fortifications, and the foundation of entire towns.[383] In half as many years, Sumuabum boasts of similar exploits, fortifying a number of towns.[384] If one is tempted to think that building exploits of this nature were exceedingly common claims for year names, it is notable that only a handful of Akkadian year names celebrate temple, fortification, or town building or renovations, while most lauded conquests, especially the destructions of towns – the overwhelming theme within the genre. Indeed, it was only with Gudea that construction of such monuments, as well as monumental endowments to them, first eclipsed the rhetoric of conquests, a trend that continued during the Ur III and early OB periods. Temple building during the OB Period in southern Mesopotamia, where textual sources can illuminate their circumstances, usually assumed the form of rebuildings or renovations, and perhaps for this reason there are no indications that unique practices were introduced. Rather, as Madeline Fitzgerald notes, their appearance among year names suggests a "a competition for divine favor and legitimization."[385]

In the Levant, by contrast, there is clear evidence for the foundation of temples that are contemporaneous with the rise of Amorite states. In addition

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[382] This would fall roughly within Stein's "diaspora autonomy" category; see Stein 2008: 32.
[383] https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yearnames/html/t10k1.htm.
[384] http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=sumuabum.
[385] Fitzgerald 2010: 48.
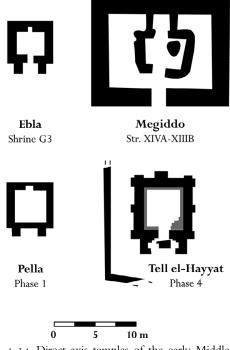
to urban planning and the construction of fortifications, royal patronage provided for the erection of monumental temples of the direct-axis *in antis* type, which formally propagated a type that prevailed among state-sponsored cultic complexes across northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant during the second half of the third millennium. A handful of such temples that are clearly dated to this period have been excavated at Ebla, Megiddo, Hayyat, and Pella (Figure 4.14).[386] At Ebla during the early MBA, Temple HH3, continues the tradition of the EB IV *in antis* temple (see Chapter 5), until its destruction at the end of the MBA. In addition to Temple HH3, most of the temples identified with late MBA Ebla possess evidence of early MBA foundations in the direct-axis type, including temples B, D, and P, as well as shrine G3 (Figure 4.14).[387] In the coastal plain south of Byblos, these have yet to be excavated among the Levant's early MBA

Ebla
Shrine G3

Megiddo
Str. XIVA-XIIIB

Pella
Phase 1

Tell el-Hayyat
Phase 4

0   5   10 m

4.14 Direct-axis temples of the early Middle Bronze Age in the Levant.
Illustration by Amy Karoll
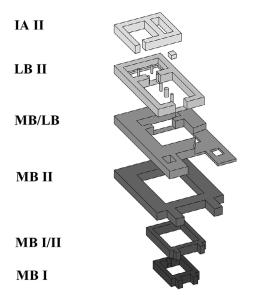
cities, such as Akko, Aphek, or Ashkelon. Nevertheless, the direct association of this temple type with traditions preserved within the urban context of the late third millennium in the northern Levant, as at Ebla, expose these as the nearest antecedents for the reintroduction of this tradition of temple construction in the southern Levant at this time.

However we may reconstruct the processes of their reintroduction, mobility by means of a growing merchant class and royal patronage most likely serve as the basis for this process. Megiddo may illustrate the point best in that its mid-third-millennium temple (4040), abandoned throughout the second half of the third millennium, became the locus for the restoration of the temple complex, which incorporated the direct-axis plan (Figure 4.14).[388] Although it is difficult to reconstruct the archaeological developments that followed, this location was later also employed for the construction of the direct-axis temple 2048 of Stratum VIII during the LBA.

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[386] D'Andrea 2014a.
[387] Pinnock 2001.
[388] Loud 1948: 84, figs. 190, 395.

IA II

LB II

MB/LB

MB II

MB I/II

MB I

4.15 Isometric drawing of six superimposed temples at Pella from the early Middle Bronze Age to the Iron Age.
Courtesy of Stephen Bourke

In the Jordan Valley, Pella and Hayyat also illustrate the development of this temple type in the southern Levant from the early MBA. Pella's temple sequence reveals a great deal concerning the reintroduction of the direct-axis tradition during the MBA and its subsequent evolution through the early Iron Age (Figure 4.15). The first two centuries of its existence, phases 1 and 2, reveal a modest structure of little more than 9 × 7 m that gradually expanded in size by the late MBA (Figure 4.14).[389] Nevertheless, which deity was worshipped in this or the later temples remains unclear, though a manifestation of Hadad would seem a likely candidate. At Tell el-Hayyat, a small site only 5 km to the southwest of Pella, a series of four temples (phases 5 to 1) were also constructed, spanning the entirety of the MBA.[390] Over its life the structure grew in size from a 7.6 × 7.6 m building to 11 × 10 m (Figure 4.14). In Phase 5, the structure began with a clear *in antis* form, although perhaps more roughly constructed than exemplars in the north. Over time the building assumed a far more regular and ornate form. From Phase 4, standing stones were also erected outside the building and throughout its history the temple complex featured an enclosure wall.

In Mesopotamia the evolution of temple architecture is more fractured, if largely due to a limited understanding of early second millennium phases of temple architecture. This leaves us with questions about the forms that came between the examples known during an age of Amorite political hegemony, and those of the late third millennium, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Nevertheless, royal patronage remained the basis for these endeavors and with an increasing number of Amorite dynasties and the presence of Amorite factions. In contrast to the Levant, the direct-axis temple type appears to have proliferated during the early MBA, but it did so alongside a variety of other temple and shrine types, reflecting Mesopotamia's diverse populations and their cultic traditions.

Yet patronage was not limited to the construction of monuments, the mere visible traces of this patronage. Mari's kings during the early eighteenth century

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[389] Bourke 2012: 162–65.
[390] Falconer and Magness-Gardiner 1993: 592; Falconer and Fall 2006.

employed various festivals and ritual circuits intended to consolidate and integrate communities across the kingdom's vast expanse,[391] practices which were doubtlessly developing during the preceding century. Temples, shrines, open spaces within towns, and the reception halls of palaces were the central loci for many of these events, thus inscribing the significance of these patronized monuments upon those participating in festivals and events sponsored by the court, principally among the region's elites.

As such, publicly displayed laws and other stele, served as a central means of messaging elites and their followers concerning royal sponsorship. Although we are lacking for examples of Amorite royal patronage of laws during the nineteenth century, between those of Lipit-Ishtar (1930 BC) and those that followed in the eighteenth century, such as the *Laws of Eshnunna* (1770 BC) and Hammurapi (1750 BC), such laws evidently retained an importance among Amorite rulers during the early MBA. The existence of this wider practice is perhaps supported by the observation that *narû* (i.e., stelae) with inscribed laws upon them are even mentioned among the OA documents during the early MBA.[392]

The palace was also the locus of the most important rituals patronized by kings, with a wide adoption of the *kispu*. As Gerdien Jonker observes, "With the emergence of the Amorite dynasties, the religious context within which names were recited changed . . . [shifting] from the temple to the throne room and the private house."[393] This seems well in line with the practices of other elites in the early second millennium, which witnessed an emphasis on the household as evidenced, for instance, through residential burials. Whether or not such traditions were more Amorite than not seems impossible to say. However, they are widely attested among Amorite communities, and conspicuous among Amorite enclaves, as I have suggested at Avaris in connection with its Amorite inhabitants. Nevertheless, such practices advanced rapidly within the socioeconomic milieu that saw the rise of Amorite power and it went in tandem with an emphasis on the employment of genealogies by Amorite dynasties,[394] which served as political charters, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Elite Emulation

Although royal patronage played a very important role in the shaping of traditions through the construction and endowment of conspicuous

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[391] Ristvet 2014: 92–152.
[392] Larsen 2015: 108, see 296n15 for text.
[393] Jonker 1995: 187.
[394] Ibid.: 213–34.

monuments, it was, in fact, the wider emulation of customs by elites within Amorite communities that ultimately contributed to the cultivation of the cultural koine that prevailed during the late MBA. Without the broader embracing of these customs, the traditions to which royal monuments ascribed would have reached more limited audiences and would likely have been short lived. Perhaps, somewhat ironically, increasing participation in the Amorite oikoumene had the effect of gradually disassociating many of these traditions from Amorites. Consequently, in many circumstances it is highly likely that distance and time had the effect of decoupling the propagation of these traditions from their Amorite patrons, particularly after the eighteenth century BC. As exposed in the preceding chapters, these traditions were certainly rooted largely in a late third-millennium Mesopotamian royal milieu. It remains, possible, therefore that its embrace was, in part, viewed as transcending its immediate Amorite associations. Elite patronage of traditions, while often interpreted as simple emulation of those in power, was a complicated balance between what other elites saw as essential to their own legitimation and what a wider public of dependents could tolerate to see embraced.

Many of the traditions that elites appear to have consented to during the rise of Amorite power were certainly a part of an emerging set of mostly Mesopotamian traditions, as noted earlier, and may not necessarily have been viewed as Amorite per se, despite their immediate patronage by Amorite rulers. Other practices, such as residential burials, may have been rooted in a shared ethos of the age, namely a concern with the protection of family interests, as Nicola Laneri notes.[395] Elite burial practices, which shared in, if they did not explicitly emulate, royal practices, served elites by reifying family bonds, particularly during uncertain and insecure times, which fairly well describes the early MBA.

Burial customs at the start of the second millennium reveal that communities were undergoing significant social transformations, reflecting the presence of various social groups and likely reflective of kinship, primarily tribal, affiliations. The early second millennium revealed a shift, for example, in commemoration of the dead away from the temple to that of the house, whether the palace or private homes.[396] The contemporaneous occurrence of third-millennium burial types with the increasing appearance of multiple or group interments reveal a need to reinforce kinship ties. Throughout Mesopotamia as well as Anatolia, intramural residential burial customs are attested at a wide array of early MBA sites, such as Tell Hammam et-Turkman, Tell Barri, Chagar Bazar, Tell Mozan, Tell Mohammed Diyab, Tell Arbid, Tell Halawa, Assur, Ur, Isin, Larsa, Sippar, and Nippur, including

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[395] Laneri 2011; Laneri 2014.
[396] Jonker 1995: 187–90.

Kanesh and, Susa and Choga Zanbil.[397] Excavations of the MBA cemetery at Tell Mozan, a Hurrian center, also revealed the continuation of third-millennium burial traditions but alongside the initial appearance of multiple-interment chambers, one of which also featured the burial of an equid outside the vaulted mudbrick structure.[398]

A number of elements in the archaeological record of the early second millennium reveal the social context of early settlement. Among these are limited evidence for large group burials, which suggest the gradual development of social and kinship ties within developing communities. The early employment of individual male burials, single cist burials for children, and jar burials for infants,[399] are suggestive of socially tentative conditions when compared to the prevalence of communal burials, whether in structural tombs under houses or extramural chamber tombs in Canaan during the second half of the MBA, while residential funerary chambers were already prevalent in Mesopotamia in the early second millennium.

Despite evidence for intermarriage and gradual social integration of foreign merchants within some communities as might be expected, as at Kanesh, some segregation is also evident. Although texts from Kanesh like those discussed earlier point to such issues, this aspect is particularly visible archaeologically among burial customs during the early MBA. While there was an emerging interest and concern for residential funerary customs that helped maintain family identity (see Chapter 5), which are highly conspicuous in the archaeological record, its antithesis is found among solitary, mostly male, burials of the early MBA, which are suggestive of an early phase of social disarticulation. This is arguably tied to emergent communities in a trade diaspora when these newcomers remained socially marginalized.[400] Particularly prevalent in this context are individual male burials in a number of different contexts, but also nuclear household burials that consist of father, mother, and any of their children, but limited evidence for the existence of extended households yet, which were to become characteristic of the late MBA. These burials, I suggest, provide a window into the lives of merchants and other mobile factions during the early second millennium. A number of burials of usually solitary armed males suggest the possibility of their identification with a burgeoning class of merchants and mercenaries connected with intensification of long-distance overland trade from the late third to early second millennium. It is in the context of long-distance caravan trade that the so-called warrior burials are best understood. While the phenomenon begins already during the late third

[397] For references, see Laneri 2011: 130.
[398] Wissing 2012.
[399] Ilan 1996: 252.
[400] Stein 2008: 31.

millennium, this tradition was already waning by the eighteenth century BC and altogether disappeared by the sixteenth century BC.[401]

Recent critiques have been leveled concerning the characterization of such interments as "warrior" burials.[402] These note that the identification of these individuals as warriors overstates certainty regarding the occupation of these males and that, fundamentally, the weapons associated with these burials functioned as markers of status, particularly since they are not found among all male burials nor were all "warrior" burials identically outfitted with weapons. While it is generally agreed that the weapons mark status, status was even more variable than the presence of these items would suggest given the range of other artifacts that were also buried with these individuals. These include, for example, equids, ornate belts, and other paraphernalia possibly intended to highlight their status.[403] The prevalence of axes among individual male burials is therefore only one part of larger constellation of items that served to mark status among these males. Furthermore, not all armed males were buried in isolation.

While other explanations have been suggested for the phenomenon of "warrior" burials, the lack of trauma to these individuals, among other issues, require a more nuanced characterization of them. Indeed, the variety among male burials, which, as at Avaris, could include equids, is suggestive of the significance in life of the goods accompanying the dead, namely their association with particular trades or crafts. Since not all male burials feature such accoutrements we can safely conclude that their inclusion was a highly symbolic and conspicuous act, which while indeed marking status, was largely a reflection of their occupation, which was at the root of the status they displayed. Thus, I would suggest that such burials, particularly because of their isolated nature, are a reflection of the socioeconomic status and social dislocation of merchants and other mobile personnel, perhaps including mercenaries, many of whom died abroad but, more specifically, were often buried among members of their guild and thus occur in broader groupings. By identifying this burial type as usually those of merchants and other foreigners during the early MBA, it is possible to acknowledge that the phenomenon is associated with a discrete historical period during which security concerns associated with caravan activities were more acute than they were earlier or later. The prevalence of large territorial states during the second half of the MBA – the latter part of the OB Period – would have significantly shifted the activities of caravan security to the royal domain, potentially making it less conspicuous at the level of the individual archaeologically. Movement away from the strict

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[401] See Philip 1995: 144–46.
[402] Rehm 2003; Kletter and Levi 2016.
[403] Kletter and Levi 2016: 9–10.

classification of these burials with warriors, as suggested by the nomenclature, permits a broader consideration of their social and economic significance, and the recognition that they reflect mobility during the early MBA, principally associated with males participating, in one or another aspect of long-distance travel and exchange.

As discussed in the context of legitimation earlier, another major element of elite, non-royal, patronage, was the propagation of literary and historical traditions, imagined or otherwise. The scribal schools of the OB Period formed the basis for the construction and manipulation of history, and they reflect that part of cultural memory that we can recover. As Jonker notes,

> Here transition was effected by means of reading and writing and was concentrated on central institutions (the "scribal schools"). In the communicative memory the transition took place with the help of ritual acts, centered around commemoration ceremonies which were celebrated at home.[404]

Once again, as with burials, the locus of these practices was the home. Consequently, the products of scribal schools provide not merely a recompilation of historical data and cultural memories, but likewise reveal social critiques whether of kings (e.g., Gilgamesh and Sargon), peoples (e.g., the Martu), or of dynasties and towns, as in the laments. Thus, elite patronage was not a blind endeavor of support for those in power, but a balancing act that reflects attempts to satisfy varied constituencies from the extended household outward.

Intermarriage and Kinship

The greatest value of the documentation from the OA *kārum* at Kanesh may not be the economic information it provides about trade, but rather the often-oblique social information that these communications convey about the lives of merchants and, by example, very likely other mobile personnel during the early MBA. Among such material, for example, is a corpus of legal texts that accounts for as much as 40 percent of the OA documentation.[405] This, I suggest, is the "missing link" in earlier attempts to understand trade as social action in this period. As witnessed at Kanesh, marriage was likely the most significant institution in the processes of social integration and the sharing of traditions, especially in the production of hybrid forms of certain types of material culture seen in the early second millennium.[406] Marriage played a role in the construction of alliances between families. While the first generation of

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[404] Jonker 1995: 30.
[405] Hertel 2013.
[406] Lumsden 2008; Michel 2014: 78–79; Heffron 2017.

men evidently did not marry Anatolian women, by the second generation Assyrian men began marrying local women in Kanesh, whether out of necessity, practicality, or simply desire.[407]

I would argue that the case of Shalim-Assur at Kanesh, whose family archive reveals the workings of six generations of merchant men in Anatolia as part of the OA trade collective, serves as an ideal window into the types of social exchanges trade diasporas effected during the early second millennium.[408] According to Larsen, this individual was an "envoy," suggesting more than a merely mercantile capacity. Despite his work with the "Office of the Colony" in the service of the OA trade, there are clues that he and his family carried out trade on the side, without the involvement of this administrative apparatus. Whether this qualifies as free trade or merely work within the latitude afforded by their political and economic standing is not entirely clear, but it comports with the type of behavior we might expect to grow out of such an enterprise over time.

The role played by intermarriage between different groups in trade diaspora contexts can be identified in a number of ways, including among the linguistics of naming conventions, biological traits, material culture, and literary traditions. The range of naming conventions addressed throughout this work reveal the complexities surrounding the ascription of identity on the basis of names. What can be concluded from the evidence is, however, that various traditions were at work among the naming conventions practiced at any given moment by groups identified as Amorites. Nevertheless, the linguistic affiliations of naming practices point to streams of tradition, which at the very least, were familiar to those involved in the bestowing of names, notably parents. Although data are inadequate for forming unequivocal conclusions, we can identify trends among naming conventions that are explained by the broader cultural contexts in which they appear.

In Babylonia, Amorite names, conspicuous as they are among our sources as noted previously, comprise only a fraction of the linguistic traditions represented by the corpus of names in OB sources. This suggests the relative position of Amorite groups among the mixed communities of southern Mesopotamia. Although they were conspicuous members of these communities, they remained a relative minority nonetheless. This picture changes substantially, however, moving to the west from Mari to the Levant, where fewer linguistically non-Amorite names are identified, and Amorite names make up the greater percentage of names, whether among the Execration Texts relating to the Levant or the later Mari letters for northern Mesopotamia. As the picture in Canaan makes starkly clear, settlement by merchants and

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[407] Larsen 2015: 208–12.
[408] Larsen, Bayram, and Bilgiç 2010; Larsen 2015: 70–73, 126, 165.

other outsiders substantially altered the composition of the region's population, introducing a large foreign population into areas during a nadir in its settlement history. The stage was therefore set for the potential that exogenous influences would be more conspicuous in the southern Levant than in southern Mesopotamia, for instance.

The relatively rapid appearance of foreign traditions, cultural influences, and foreign names supports the general conclusion that newly founded towns in the Levant, for example, that were initially located along corridors of trade and transport during the early MBA, featured large components of fairly mobile communities. This, of course, has invited consideration of scientific means that might expose the points of origin with which members of these communities can be identified. Morphometric analyses of skeletal remains have yet to create a consensus, despite claims that certain traits appear within the assemblage. Various studies have focused on MBA burial assemblages,[409] contrasting them with the skeletal evidence from late third millennium and earlier populations.[410] Analysis of the burials in a transitional MB I–II tomb at Hazor illustrates the traditional emphasis on the identification of anatomical features of skulls, noting that MBA skulls in Canaan reveal a broadening from earlier examples and a gradual return to "the normative Mediterranean dolichocephalia" afterward.[411] The transition during the MBA is considered abrupt. Even if these observations proved true, the sample sizes remain too small and further study is necessary.

More promising are studies that reveal differences in diet or exposure to environmental stresses. In one study, based on differences in the dental morphology between Jebel Qaʻaqir and Sasa, it was observed that the Middle Bronze inhabitants of Sasa in northern Israel suffered from greater periodontal disease and higher hypoplasia suggestive of "an abrasive diet, with baking, rather than boiling, the favored method of cooking."[412] But was this just endemic to the inhabitants of this backwater site, or typical of the MBA population at large?[413] No comparable studies have been possible in Kanesh where bones from burials within houses were until very recently simply discarded.

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[409] Teeth and long bones, for example, reveal "developmental defects, which provide a record of the age, duration and severity of the grown insult" as a result of environmental stresses that were greater than those of the preceding period (i.e., EB IV), and the result was a "reduction in size and decreased robustness" supporting the "hypothesis of genetic change in the MB II" resulting from "widespread population movements" (Smith 2004: 42★). See also Acreche 2001.

[410] See, and bibliography therein, Smith 2014; Nagar 2014.

[411] Arensburg and Belfer-Cohen 1997: 342.

[412] Peretz and Smith 2004: 47★–48★.

[413] Compare, for example, Alexandersen 1978.

The analyses of aDNA that are now being undertaken hold perhaps the greatest potential to provide personal histories behind the movements of individuals during the MBA.[414] However, the datasets are too few and too small yet. aDNA analyses have been recently published for MBA burials from Tell Fadous–Kfarabida, for instance, but largely with the purpose of identifying Iron Age Phoenician populations,[415] and not related to questions associated with the identity of earlier populations, as if MBA populations were representative of a baseline of static, ancient populations tethered to a geographic area. At Ashkelon, extensive aDNA analyses were conducted on a tomb in continuous use from the MB II to the end of the LB. These revealed three patrilineages, suggesting that burial was according to patrilineal descent and marriage was virilocal.[416] Although various research programs are underway to identify MBA populations in the Levant by employing aDNA, the conclusions, while tantalizing, remain tentative.

If further evidence is required for understanding how intermarriage generated productive social interactions between communities in the early MBA, a surprising source may be the story of *The Marriage of Martu*.[417] Although it is preserved in a fragmentary Sumerian manuscript from Nippur, the earliest copy of the text dates to the OB Period. The story evokes the social context of southern Mesopotamian communities in the early second millennium, notably the marginal status of Amorites and the challenges of acceptance within a foreign community. *The Marriage of Martu* relates the marriage of the god Martu (^{d}mar-tu = ^{d}Amurru) to the Sumerian goddess Adnigkudu, the daughter of Numushda, suggesting from the outset that the story primarily served as an allegory about the integration of Amorites in southern Mesopotamian society.

While a lengthy excursus on the god Martu might seem warranted, it suffices to recognize that Martu was a *theos eponymos*, a construct of Sumerian religious tradition intended, perhaps, to integrate Amorites into Babylonian theology, as evidenced by the conspicuous absence of this divine name among Amorite personal names.[418] Nevertheless, temples for Amurrum were constructed, examples of which were built during the reign of Damiq-

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[414] A major impediment to such scientific inquiry are Israel's antiquities laws that allow for the premature interference by the religious authorities, who when consulted remain inflexible concerning modern scientific testing of human remains. Consequently, there are too few data concerning morphological characteristics (to say nothing of DNA) for ancient populations within Israel.

[415] Matisoo-Smith, Gosling, Platt, et al. 2018.

[416] Stager 2008: 1580.

[417] S. Kramer 1990.

[418] Streck 2000: 68–69.

ilishu (1816–1794 BC)[419] and the difficult-to-date reign of Manana, king of the dynasty of Mananā.[420]

While the veneration of Martu as a deity was evidently not directed at Amorites, as illustrated by his absence among Amorite names, his function was highly symbolic. The primary challenge Martu faces in this story is finding a wife among his own kin, a likely reflex of the concerns of Amorites dwelling in Sumerian society where they constituted a clear minority.

> Martu – to his mother who gave birth to him –
> He had entered (her) house – says to her:
> "In my city my friends – mine – have wives,
> My companions – mine – have children(!)
> In my city (among) my friends I (alone) have no wife,
> I have no wife, I have no child,
> Greater is (my) . . . -share than(?) (that) of my friend.
> Greater is (my) . . . -levy than(?) (that) of my companion."
> Martu who was all alone, places two of them.
> [Mar]tu, to his mother who gave birth to him -
> He had entered (her) house – says to her:
> "My mother, take a wife for me, I would bring you my bread offerings."
> His mother who gave birth to him answers Martu:
> "Oh . . . I would give you, [take my] instruction,
> A word I would [speak to you, to my word your ear!]
> [Take] a wife wheresoever you raise (your) eyes,
> [Take] a wife wheresoever your heart leads you,
> In my . . . a slave-girl. . . . ,
> . . . Among your (folk who live) by the side of the city, their built houses.
> . . . , Among your companions, the wells(?)."[421]

The reference to kin who dwell "by the side of the city" should seem an unusually specific qualification. Inasmuch as it has been cited in support of a pastoral-nomadic characterization of Amorites, it suggests that Martu's kin are not to be found on the steppe but within sedentary communities, or quarters of towns in which Amorite enclaves existed. However, he is drawn to the city of Ninab where he engages in combat games and accepts only Adnigkudu as his bride for his reward. After some equivocation on her part, her friend employs, to no avail, tropes for highland-dwelling Amorites during the Ur III in order to disqualify him as a worthwhile spouse.

> He who dwells on the mountain
> Having carried on(?) much strife with the *kur,* he knows not submission,
> He eats uncooked food,
> He has no house while he lives,

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[419] http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_damiq-ilishu.
[420] https://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yearnames/HTML/T20K1.htm.
[421] *Marriage of Martu*, lns. 26–50, translation by Kramer 1990; see also Klein 1997: 114.

> He is not interred when he dies,
> My friend – how is it you would marry Martu![422]

As Paul-Alain Beaulieu notes, the deity Martu served first and foremost to embody the "ethno-linguistic and cultural identity" of a cultural memory of Amorites during the Ur III Period from the Sumerian perspective.[423] There is no basis for identifying any deity named Amurrum as an Amorite innovation since he was not commemorated among Amorites in the west and the deity was not a part of the Amorite onomastic tradition.[424] This tradition serves therefore as both a waypoint for identifying the context in which Amurrum was added to the Babylonian pantheon and as a reflection of the progression of Amorite integration in southern Mesopotamian society during the OB Period. As the story relates, the god Amurrum, who is stereotypically qualified as "the other," is ultimately married to Adnigkudu. The story might be read therefore as a triumphalist narrative in the struggle for broader social integration that Amorites experienced during the early second millennium, and furthermore highlights a primary means by which this integration occurred.

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[422] Translation by Kramer 1990, lns. 134–39.
[423] Beaulieu 2005: 34.
[424] Michael Streck (2000) did not identify any references to the divinity Amurrum among more than 7,000 Amorite personal names of the OB Period. This was a continuation of the trend among names during the Ur III Period (Beaulieu 2005: 35).

COMPETITION AND EMULATION

The Amorite Koine from Dilmun to Avaris, 1800–1550 BC

By 1792 BC, a group of kings, often invoking a common identity as Amorites, ruled a vast stretch of territory from the Persian Gulf to the southern Levant. In Mesopotamia, Hammurapi ascended the throne of Babylon, while Zimri-Lim ruled in Mari, and Shamshi-Adad I in Assur along the Tigris.[1] In the Levant, Yarim-Lim ruled in Ḫalab, Amutpiel in Qatna, and Ibni-Adad in Hazor.[2] As an oft-cited letter from Mari concerning the sacrifice of Ishtar makes clear, each of these great Amorite kings was also followed by a cadre of vassals.
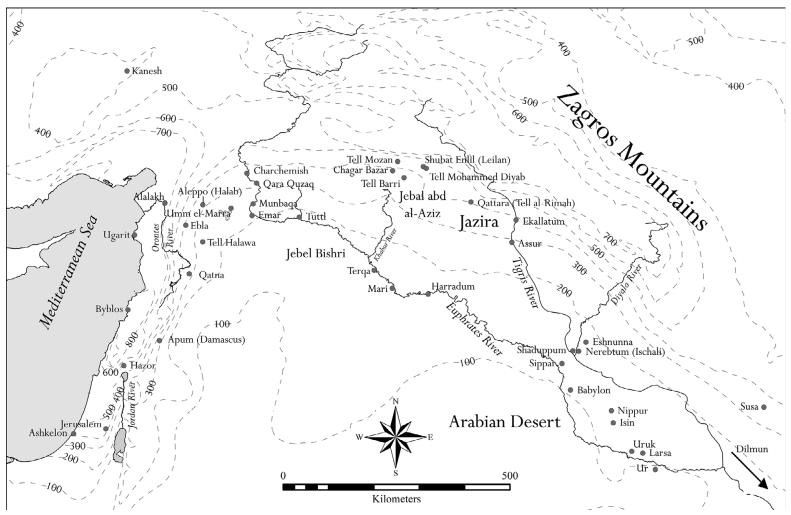
> Concerning the message that my lord sent to the kings, which said, "Come to the sacrifice of Ištar." I had them assemble at Šarmaneh and I addressed them as follows, saying "There is no king who is strong on his own: ten to fifteen kings follow Ḫammurapi of Babylon, Rim-Sin of Larsa the same, Ibalpiel of Eshnunna the same, Amutpiel of Qatna the same, and twenty kings follow Yarim-Lim of Yamḫad."[3]

Whether they explicitly claimed an Amorite heritage or were simply identified by others as Amorite by virtue of their names or lineages – from Dilmun and Babylon to Mari and Shubat Enlil, Ḫalab (Aleppo), Ugarit, Qatna, Apum (Damascus), Byblos, Hazor, and Ashkelon (Figure 5.1) – Amorite dynasties

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[1] See OB Period in Kuhrt 1995: 74–80.
[2] For Amorite dynasties in the northern Levant, see Klengel 1992: 39–80.
[3] Dossin 1938: 117–18.

5.1 Map of sites discussed in this chapter, ca. 1800 BC.
Map by Amy Karoll

ruled extensive territorial states across the Near East. By 1650 BC in the eastern Nile Delta, an Amorite dynasty identified as the Hyksos took power at Avaris,[4] while in the east another ruled in ancient Dilmun (Bahrain).[5] Shared traditions of kingship, warfare, diplomacy, cult, and social order cultivated their social identity as Amorites.

During the second half of the MBA (ca. 1800–1550 BC) Amorite communities played a profound role in the shaping of Near Eastern history and traditions, as revealed by extensive textual corpora from the Persian Gulf to the Nile Delta. As the Mari texts show, Amorite rulers and their contemporaries were in regular diplomatic contact, forging alliances, intermarrying their households, and warring against each other, while their merchants traversed the region's roads with an unprecedented intensity. The collective appearance of these rulers and their identification as Amorites among our sources suggest their successful efforts to establish their legitimacy not only within this brotherhood of kingship, but also by means of their Amorite identity among their subjects. Within the emerging kin-based language of relationships between these Semitic kings, equals referred to each other as "brother," while subordinates referred to their masters as "father," and the weakest of groveling rulers might identify themselves as the "servant" or "slave" of their lord. Nearly incessant warfare became a cornerstone of Amorite rulers' efforts to legitimate their rules, which contributed to the conscription and deployment of enormous armies. Conflict between Amorite rulers therefore resulted in a remarkably predictable art of war.

Despite the varied sizes of Amorite communities from Dilmun to Avaris, one of the results of these intensive exchanges was the cultivation of a cultural koine. Remarkable parallels can be identified among different cultural assemblages and monuments across the Fertile Crescent. The monumental character of many of these features point to the role they played in cultivating a shared identity that served social, political, and economic interests. Massive earthen ramparts and mudbrick fortifications encircled all but the smallest settlements. Palaces and especially temples, perched atop their acropoleis, cast long shadows over urban centers and their countrysides. Palaces incorporated familiar cultural symbols and served as the basis for the propagation of many of the traditions that were now widespread across the Near East. These monuments created a means by which Amorite identity was actively inscribed within urban landscapes but also by which practitioners could be incorporated into an imagined Amorite past through participation in public royal traditions, cultic rituals, and social customs.[6] Such traditions had deep roots, tracing back to the second half of the third millennium.

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[4] Candelora 2017.
[5] Marchesi 2017.
[6] See Connerton 1989: 72–73, which I have elsewhere discussed (Burke 2014: 366–68).

In addition to rulers, local elites were intensively active in both constructing and critiquing Amorite rule, supporting scribal schools producing a wide range of works that propagated a shared set of ideals and perceptions, even if the city-states of which they were a part were in direct competition. These schools also prepared individuals for service to their lords during a period that saw intensive correspondence between rulers and among merchants as well as the production of law collections of remarkably similar content, scope, and aims.

Kinship and ancestry also received renewed attention. Deceased rulers were often gathered to their ancestors in family crypts below their palaces, where generations of earlier rulers had been buried. Rites, including ritual feasts and festivals, inscribed a shared ideology in which recently deceased rulers joined a cadre of venerated, long-dead kings. Urban elites likewise mimicked these burial customs, but they also adapted them to different settings both social and environmental. There was a concern to maintain not only the integrity but the identity of extended households, and there was a fashion for burial as there was for many other facets of daily life.

Temples also reveal the widespread adoption of remarkably similar plans, paraphernalia, and practices. Despite their varied sizes and the complexity of the compounds in which they were situated, they shared in a common plan and style of construction that can be identified among examples from Babylonia to the Nile Delta and into Anatolia. The largest temple compounds were usually enclosed, often featuring vast store rooms housing cultic paraphernalia acquired over the lengthy lives of these buildings. Altars, stelae, and statues graced their exterior courtyards as accretions of communal memories yet reflecting shared forms of expression. Common customs of extispicy and sacrifice as well as ritual deposits reveal a world of shared ritual and cultic behaviors across Amorite communities amidst the diverse social environments in which they were located.

In this chapter, this emergent koine is defined by means of conspicuous archaeological features and the practices associated with them, which are often highlighted in textual sources from the period. From palace architectural and artistic traditions, burial practices, and ritual and cult, a wide array of data support the recognition of this koine. By virtue of its associations with Amorite communities and their ruling elites, it is identified as an Amorite koine. As such, it arguably facilitated relations between Amorite rulers. Despite this leveling effect, many local traditions persisted, as various differences in material culture across these wide regions certainly reveal. Other differences in customs are made explicit through textual sources that reveal that the commonalities we can identify were not universal and that we are limited in our ability to understand the actual importance of various traditions to the ancient communities in which they were practiced. It is assumed therefore that a number of aspects of material culture expose areas of divergence in cultural expression that

resulted from local customs that were not widely adopted and therefore did not achieve the visibility or conspicuousness that was inherent to the Amorite koine. Although such subjects form an interesting basis for further research, the focus of this chapter remains the identification of shared traditions that permit their qualification as part of this koine. This, it is argued, served as a cultural bridge to the diverse social environments and alterity that many communities encountered by virtue of the personal mobility that had become veritably commonplace during the MBA.

IDENTITY IN THE "AGE OF AMORITES"

By the second half of the MBA, drawing on earlier traditions, identification of individuals as Amorite was possible via spoken language, naming conventions, association with Amorite tribal groups, or a cultural memory of Amorite genealogy. The label "Amorite" also served as a modifier for a range of things. Since the Akkadian Period various things had been qualified as "Amorite," including certain types of sheep, donkeys, wool, daggers, textiles, silver, and figs, among other items of seeming prestige.[7] There is ample ground, therefore, for the argument that by the MBA, the identification of someone or something with the label Amorite bore some significance.

Even so, increasing interactions between distant communities calls into question a heavy, if not nearly exclusive, reliance on language, naming practices, and labels for the ascription of Amorite identity, let alone any other single characteristic. Increasing references by the late third millennium to Amorite tribes and their activities expose social collectives with which many individuals affiliated, whether through fictive or real kinship. The identification of kings with Amorite tribes also steadily increased from the start of the OB Period through its close, giving the impression that Amorite communities, especially tribes, wielded considerable clout as political factions within MBA communities. OB sources reveal instances of the negotiation of identity by elites who claimed affiliation with Amorites, often through genealogies, such that the boundaries around what it meant to be Amorite became increasingly blurred. The steps in this process illustrate the morphing of Amorite identity from something more akin to an ethnic affiliation to that of a broader social identity over the course of the OB Period.

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[7] On silver, see Sturm 1995. See also Text 32 in Kienast 1960; also CCT 2:49a in Smith and Wiseman 1921–1927, 1956; on daggers, see Archi 1993a; also Vidal 2011; and Silver 2014: 254–55. See also *amurrû* in *CAD* A/2, pp. 93–95. The distinct possibility should also be considered that an adjectival use of the term may also imply a directional sense, such as "western," to refer to a geographic region known as *Amurru*.

The relationship of Amorite individuals, tribes, and clans to political power during this period has led some historians to embrace the identification of this period as the "age of Amorites."[8] The traditional terminology for this period in Mesopotamia, known as OB Period, is, by contrast, restrictive since it relates largely to a southern Mesopotamian perspective, emphasizing mostly the lingua franca for writing during the period, namely OB. There was, however, no group to which the term "Old Babylonian" can be applied. At best it is a restricted geographically oriented term. To identify this period as an "age of Amorites" underscores, however, the recurring issues of identity that are raised by the frequent qualification of individuals, tribes and clans, and things as Amorite, from the Persian Gulf to central Anatolia and Egypt.

Individual Identity: Language and Naming Conventions

Owing to both an absence of a corpus of agreed-upon Amorite inscriptions and limited confidence that undeciphered scripts of the late third millennium should be identified as Amorite,[9] Amorite as a language remains entirely reconstructed from the linguistic elements of personal names as well as the occurrence of some Amorite loanwords in Sumerian and OB.[10] Given that we possess only a few references to spoken Amorite, it suggests that this was an optional if common element of Amorite identity throughout the OB world.[11] Nonetheless, Amorite as a language remained significant for its widespread influence on naming practices that are prevalent during the MBA, suggesting that the language was fairly widely spoken.

After the Ur III, the largest corpus of Amorite names remains those from Mari during the eighteenth century BC,[12] despite the fact that the corpus of Ur III texts is larger than those from the OB Period. In all, more than 7,000 Amorite names are attested during the OB Period.[13] These names are identified as Amorite on the basis of their linguistic classification, though some names are not easily distinguished from Akkadian names, as all of these names were rendered in OB cuneiform, except for the few that are preserved in Middle Egyptian texts.

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[8] The term has been formally proposed by Durand 1992. More recently, see Charpin 2004: 38.

[9] It is entirely possible, for example, that either the undeciphered inscriptions of the Byblian Script (see Kaufman 1989) or the third-millennium inscribed clay cylinders from Umm el-Marra (Schwartz 2010) preserve an early alphabetic rendering of Amorite, if not another early NWS language.

[10] See Buccellati 1966; Huffmon 1965; Streck 2000: 82–128; Knudsen 2004.

[11] Ziegler and Charpin 2007.

[12] Although now dated, see Huffmon 1965.

[13] Streck 2000.

Amorite words that are preserved in OB texts provide another source for the study of Amorite language. Michael Streck suggests Amorite loanwords in OB "fill a semantic gap" providing "words for tribal units and institutions, husbandry, nomadic camp," which are often "closely connected to … nomadic activities: hunt and messenger service, weaving and razzia," while legal and cultic terms "attest to typical nomadic institutions and traditions."[14] While there remains debate concerning the circumstances surrounding the adoption of particular Amorite vocabulary, the social and economic contexts for references to Amorites in late third-millennium Mesopotamian society certainly provide ample latitude for the incorporation of a range of Amorite words in OB. There is little reason, however, to overly restrict this spectrum and reify an exclusively pastoralist identity for Amorites during this period.

Despite that not a single Amorite text has been identified, to date the Amorite glossary consists of approximately 11,600 words. For a sense of the significance of this number, we can compare this to the fewer than 9,000 distinct words in Biblical Hebrew. We therefore have a substantial basis for identifying Amorite as a unique West Semitic language spoken among Amorite groups, which also informed naming practices among their members and, quite possibly, to some extent among their neighbors. Individuals could even change their names or carry variant names in another language to cater to different constituencies. The Assyrian king known by his Amorite name, Shamshi-Addu, is also known, for instance, as Shamshi-Adad in Akkadian.

Of significance concerning a discussion of Amorite names are also the prevailing ideological implications of naming practices. Religious customs and orientation traditionally change far more slowly than the spoken language of a population, while languages can change within the span of a single generation. Thus, theophoric (divine name) elements within personal names potentially reveal the cultic affinities of individuals or their parents. In contrast to naming conventions in modern times, names in antiquity were highly charged representations of a family's cultic devotion. With respect to cultic orientations, both Sumero-Akkadian and Amorite divine names occur among Amorite personal names, suggesting the potential negotiation of cultic devotion among Amorites in, for example, the context of marriage.

Many Amorite names conform to a traditional pattern of including a common Akkadian or Sumerian divine name as a theophoric element within the personal name. At Mari, for example, these include prominent references to non-Amorite deities such as Annu, Ea, Irra, Itur-Mer/Mer, Nabu, Sin, and Shamash, among others.[15] During the Ur III Period, names included Yariḫ

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[14] Streck suggests that the vocabulary reveal a limited relevance of the "material culture of the nomads for the sedentary people" (Streck 2011b: 366–67).

[15] Durand 2008; also Huffmon 1965: 270–73.

(e.g., *Abdi-yaraḫ*, lit. "Servant of [the god] Yaraḫ"). While it is always difficult to be certain what meanings such names were intended to convey, they reveal the diversity of naming conventions that Amorites could adopt, two centuries after the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur and may serve, therefore, as one index of social integration. They also reveal a distinctly eastern aspect of Amorite naming traditions since such deities are less commonly attested among western Amorite names of the second millennium.

More recognizable as Amorite are names featuring divine names that were not previously common in southern Mesopotamian. Among deities mentioned with frequency in these names are Adad/Ḫadad, Dagon, Anat, Ḫamu/ʿAmu, and ʾEl/Ilu.[16] These occur in constructions as, for example, *Ḫ/ʿAmmu-rāpi* (cf. Hammurapi; lit. "Paternal uncle is a Healer"). These divine appellations reveal an independent tradition from those deities common among the Sumerian and Akkadian pantheons of the late third millennium, such as Enlil, An, Inanna, Nanna, and Ea, whose names are almost entirely absent in the west in peripheral Akkadian texts. This shift may reveal, therefore, more about the ideology of Amorite identity than linguistic analyses of Amorite names.

Despite the downplaying of onomastics as exclusive markers of identity because of caveats like those previously mentioned, names play a critical role in signaling group affiliation as well as linguistic association. Akkadians, Amorites, and Hurrians are the most commonly identified groups during the OB Period, collectively comprising the majority of southern Mesopotamian communities. The prevalence of Amorite names exposes the status of Amorite groups within different communities, although during the early OB Period only 8% of names were clearly Amorite, while later only 10.8% of Babylonian names are West Semitic.[17] At Qattara (Tell al-Rimah) it is estimated that Amorites constituted somewhere between 10% and 25% of the population, 34% at Eshnunna in the Diyala, but more than 40% at Mari and a majority at Harradum, just to its south.[18] It is uncertain to what extent such figures speak to the populations of the southern Mesopotamian countryside, where it has been suggested higher percentages of Amorites may have dwelt.[19] Yet they do

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[16] Huffmon 1965.

[17] Knudsen 1999: 203.

[18] Whiting 1987; Kupper 1957: 25–26; Rasmussen 1981: 17; Dalley, Walker and Hawkins 1976: 38. Dalley et al provides a breakdown of percentage of Akkadian, Amorite, and Hurrian names among the Temple texts and Iltani archives at Rimah, compared with Chagar Bazar. Respectively these are 35%, 26.5%, and 15.8% among the Iltani archive (177 total names), and 9.4%, 7.3%, and 42.7% among Temple texts (96 total names), and 32.2%, 15.5%, and 20.6% among 476 names attested at Chagar Bazar. Rasmussen, likewise, provides 40.4% Amorite, 33.6% Akkadian, 9% Hurrian, and 17% unknown and miscellaneous. Concerning Harradum, see Kepinski 2005: 124.

[19] Charpin 2017: 73.

also reveal a geographic trend, namely that as one moved west from the Tigris River and Babylonia the percentage of the population identified as Amorite by virtue of personal names increased substantially. This trend also maps onto tribal affiliations attested in the Mari archives.

The relevance of Amorite language to the discussion of Amorite identity is not therefore an exclusive criterion since, in fact, it is impossible to demonstrate that those who bore Amorite names actually spoke Amorite, or that bearing an Amorite name – which was presumably given by a parent – was sufficient to be identified as Amorite. Rather, Amorite language anchored the social identity of those bearing Amorite names within groups, specifically tribes and clans, some of whom at least occasionally spoke Amorite despite the fact that OB evidently served as the principal language for written communication.

Tribes and Placenames: Social Organization

Amorite linguistic affiliation also serves as the primary basis for identifying a wide range of larger social groupings, principally tribes, as Amorite.[20] From the nineteenth century BC, a number of Amorite tribes and clans appear with frequency, including Rababi, Amnanum, Yaḫrurum, Emutbalum (Yamutbalum), Numha, Mutiabal, Ida-maraṣ, Yabasa, Gungun, and Yahappalum.[21] While considerable debate exists concerning the finer points in the identification and application of the tribal and clan names preserved in the Mari letters, Amorite tribal designations mentioned include the Ben-Yamina (Benjaminites), Ben-Sim'al (Bensimalites), Hanum (Haneans), and Sutum (Suteans). The Ben-Sim'al tribe was even identified as Amurru, supporting the possibility that the designation Amurru was itself a tribal name earlier.[22] The Ben-Yamina actually appear as a confederation of a number of tribes: Amnanum, Rabbum, Uprapum, Yaḫrurum, and Yariḫum.[23] Among the Haneans were also as many as nine tribes,[24] which points to the fact that the latitude of the term "tribe" does not adequately nuance its range or political significance. Although both Benjaminites and Bensimalites included tribes whose names are attested before the period covered by the Mari archives, neither of these confederacies are identified earlier. Indeed, in many respects such groups are exposed as functioning more like confederacies or supra-tribal identities, revealing the range of social identities from individuals to confederacies that can be ascribed as Amorite. As Arne Wossink notes,[25] the

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[20] Kupper 1957; Charpin and Durand 1986; Anbar 1991; Fleming 2004: 24–103; de Boer 2014b.
[21] de Boer 2014b: 271–73.
[22] Durand 2004: 182.
[23] Anbar 1991: 83–85.
[24] Ibid.: 80–83.
[25] Wossink 2011.

fluidity of tribal boundaries is conspicuous within the Mari letters, as seen here in one part of a letter:

> Another thing. Uranum and the elders of Dabish came, saying: "By extraction, we are among the Yaḫruru, but never (as) *yarrādum*; also, in the back country, we have neither *hibrum* nor *kadûm*." We are native(?) to the Yaḫruru. Let us (now) come into the midst of the Sim'alite(s) as (part of) the Nihadû (tribe), so that we may slay the (treaty) donkey.[26]

Much has been written concerning the institutions and social organization of Amorite communities around Mari and in Mesopotamia, such as clans (*gayûm*), houses (*bītum*), quarters (*bābtum*, lit. "gate"), the *merhûm* (chief), and assemblies (*puhrum*).[27] The existence or significance of these specific institutions among Amorite communities outside of Mari remains to be fully demonstrated, however, particularly so since there are discernible differences in the structure of individual Amorite tribes attested in the Mari archives.[28] Even so, they remain our best examples of the range of social and political organizations extant among Amorite tribal communities.

Amorite tribal and clan names are in many cases identified with towns or villages, revealing the kinship basis for the constitution of many Amorite communities. As concerns the list of Amorite placenames from the OB Period, a proper and extensive treatment is not possible in this work. A few examples that have been previously collected, however, reveal the extent of this phenomenon and its significance. Some settlement names, such as Sippar-Amnanum and Sippar-Yaḫrurum, reveal Amorite-affiliated tribal settlements in the vicinity of established communities (e.g., Sippar).[29] As summarized by J. N. Postgate, examples of these also include placenames beginning with *Āl-* ("city") or *Dimat-* ("tower" or "district"), Ili-idinnam, Ishkun-DN (divine name) names (lit., "DN founded"; e.g., Ishkun-Ningirsu, Ishkun-Sin; Ishkun-Shamash, Ishkun-Warad-Sin), Kushtaratum (lit. "tents"), Mashkan-based (lit. "storehouse") names (e.g., Mashkan-abi, Mashkan-Ammiditana, Mashkan-barmi, Mashkan-Shamash, Mashkan-Shapir) as well as Sin-iqisham, Sin-ishimeni, and Shamash-nur-matim.[30] While the significance of such names within a discussion of Amorite activities varies depending on the basis for identifying them as Amorite, the proliferation of these names in Mesopotamia by ca. 1800 BC serves as a vivid reminder of the importance of onomastics in relation to Amorite identity.

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[26] Fleming 2004: 43.
[27] Anbar 1991; Fleming 2004; de Boer 2014b.
[28] Fleming 2004.
[29] Groneberg 1980: 11–13, 52–54, 108, 15, 47, 64–65, 204, and 18; Charpin 1988.
[30] Postgate 1992: 330n545.

Amorite toponyms were also associated with the expansion of hegemony by Amorite polities that appear to have included the foundation of new settlements as well as the renaming of older ones. Placenames appear to be a large part of the Amorite onomastic tradition, with many new names appearing during the early second millennium with likely Amorite etymologies.[31] Here too ideological considerations appear to have been at play. Connections between Amorite polities, particularly those created by the founding of new settlements (some through resettlement of old sites), likely resulted in the duplication of placenames.[32] Such was also the case with tribal affiliations and the movement and resettlement of members from a tribe. This is likely the case also for Yamutbalum, for example, an OB district of Larsa that bears the name of an Amorite tribe that settled along the upper Khabur River.[33] In the Levant, names were also duplicated, as witnessed in the Execration Texts. Marṣih, Apum, Qahlamu, and Shutu (Suteans?), for example, each appear twice, with distinct qualifications, in the Posener group.[34] Although precise association of these fledgling communities with established centers in the early MBA is not often possible owing to the limits of historical sources, some clues do exist as to the process. "Mirror toponymy," for instance, whereby some towns bore the name of older centers may be one indication of a relationship between specific states and their foundations.[35] The kingdom of Apum in the Khabur Basin of northern Mesopotamia bore, for example, the same name as the kingdom centered on Damascus.[36]

The naming conventions of some MBA sites in the Levant also suggest what might be characterized as Amorite linguistic traditions. Coastal sites founded in this period bear names related to a possible role in exchange. Names among the Amorite-ruled toponyms listed in the Execration Texts offer a number of examples. Ashkelon (*'Atqalanu*), for example, relates to the Semitic root **tkl* (later Canaanite *škl*) "to weigh,"[37] while various places called Aphek (*Apqum*) refer to their relationships to valleys (i.e., Amorite *apqu*).[38] Other placenames of MBA date reveal functional naming conventions as, for example, Tyre (Amorite *ṣuru*, i.e., "the rock," recognizing its import as an island harbor) or Hazor (Amorite *ḫaṣaru*, i.e., "sheep pen" or "enclosure.")[39]

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[31] Buccellati 1995: 859; Streck 2000: 149–50.
[32] Charpin 2003a.
[33] Stol 1976: 63–72.
[34] E23 and E24; E33 and E34; E39 and E40; E52 and E53 in Posener 1940.
[35] Charpin 2003a.
[36] Eidem 2008.
[37] Stager and Schloen 2008: 7; Huehnergard 2018.
[38] Streck 2000: 84.
[39] Ibid.: 94–95, 117.

Observations concerning Amorite naming conventions for sites also include the realm of sacred places. Throughout the Levant numerous sites, which are identified as MBA foundations incorporate divine names, arguably under Amorite aegis. Among the most prominent examples of these are Jerusalem (Yeru-Shalimu),[40] Beth-Shemesh, Beth-El, and Jericho, respectively preserving the names of sanctuaries to the gods Shalem, Shemesh, El, and Yariḫ all of which are well attested among Amorite names during the OB Period.[41] Numerous sites were also called Beth-Anath,[42] and the valley leading to Jerusalem from the west was called the Rephaim Valley, which is equated with the *Rapa'ūma*,[43] the shades of deceased Amorite kings. Indeed, the biblical data preserve a surprising amount of evidence for the emergence of a sacred landscape located in the southern highlands of ancient Israel, the area associated with the Iron Age kingdom of Judah.[44]

Rulers and Dynasties: Political Hegemony

It is less certain whether explicit references to kingship over Amorite tribes, such as the Amnanum (e.g., Sin-kashid of Uruk, r. 1865–1833 BC) or Emutbalum (e.g., Kudur-mabuk of Larsa), outside their dominion over these groups, implied any social relationship, though in some cases these rulers clearly belonged to these tribes. It is therefore preferable to identify other aspects of a particular kingship or dynasty that betray a wider embracing of Amorite traditions. Whether or not terms such as *abu* ("father"), as in "father of the Emutbala" and "father of Amorite lands" as used by Warad-Sin of Larsa (1834–1822 BC),[45] or "shepherd" during the OB Period are to be understood as reflective of political epithets is also not always clear.[46] In other instances, kings such as Zabaya of Larsa (r. 1941–1932 BC) and his successors overtly claimed Amorite affiliation as "Amorite chiefs (*rabían* martu; see Chapter 4).[47]

Overt efforts were also made to appropriate political identities through standard titularies associated with the dominance of largely urban communities throughout southern Mesopotamia at the start of the second millennium.

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[40] On the possibility of *yarû* as Amorite in relation to placenames, see ibid.: 122.
[41] Huffmon 1965.
[42] Ahituv 1984: 75–76.
[43] Rouillard 1999.
[44] Article in preparation by author on sacred landscape of Judean highlands.
[45] *RIME* 4.2.13.3, etc.
[46] Hallo 1980: 194–95.
[47] *RIME* 4.2.4, etc.

Many of these political titles, such as "king of Ur" (e.g., by Isin kings), "king of the four quarters," "king of the land of Sumer and Akkad," and "mighty king" were well established as official titles by the end of the Ur III Period, and they were readily adopted by OB kings. Indeed, the OB Period did not supply new political titles,[48] but rulers appear to have relied on their appropriation, often with those originating as early as the Akkadian Period.[49] One might argue that such titles served as a veritable checklist for pursuing wider legitimacy, and the gradual addition of such titles within royal inscriptions often reveals the successful expansion of political power by kings. In such cases, these identities are evidently political. Hammurapi's titles, for example, were largely of a political nature and reflect his domination over various cities, regions, and factions.[50] Among these is the title "king of all Amorite land,"[51] which appears in the wake of Hammurapi's conquest of Mari and exposes again Mari's association with Amorite identity.[52]

Of particular interest for the extension of Amorite hegemony is the dynasty at Dilmun, which is located in modern Bahrain in the Persian Gulf.[53] Its kings are mentioned among Mari letters during the reign of Shamshi-Adad, who appears to have sought to establish relations with Dilmun.[54] Their material culture is particularly well known from a group of elite burial mounds surrounded by thousands of other such smaller mounds.[55] Burial rites, while difficult to reconstruct, included provisioning the dead with ceramic containers and sheep offerings,[56] as with Amorite burials elsewhere. All of this followed an initial phase of construction of palaces, storerooms, and temples during the first two centuries of the second millennium.[57]

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[48] Hallo 1957; Landsberger 1954b.

[49] Hallo 1980.

[50] e.g., *RIME* 4.3.6.4 and 4.3.6.12. By year 31, Hammurapi identified himself as "king who makes the four quarters be at peace" and, likewise, simply "king of the four quarters" (Frayne 1990: 338, 48), appropriating the original Akkadian title (e.g., *RIME* 2.1.4.1, Frayne 1993:88). "King of the four quarters" was not widely claimed by early OB kings with the exception of examples like Ishme-Dagan and Hammurapi. This is cited as the reason that the the *Coronation of Ur-Nammu* is dated to the Isin Period (Hallo 1966: 134). Either way, by the OB Period it was a title to be achieved. Hammurapi also assumed the title "king of Sumer and Akkad," which had been claimed by Ur-Nammu (Hallo 1966), betraying his control of Nippur but also appropriation of this symbolic Sumerian title (e.g., RIME 4.3.6.16, Frayne 1990: 353, passim).

[51] *RIME* 4.3.6.10.

[52] According to M. Stol this title was likely taken by Hammurapi year 34 after conquering Mari, adding this to titles previously appropriated (*RIME* 4.3.6.10; see 1976: 84, no. 54; also Frayne 1990: 345, passim). It was maintained by Ammi-ditana (see *RIME* 4.3.9.1).

[53] Højlund 1986; Højlund 1989; Zarins 1986.

[54] Eidem and Højlund 1993.

[55] This belongs to local Phase 3. Laursen 2008; Laursen 2011.

[56] Højlund and Johansen 2007: 149.

[57] Ibid.: 124.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, by the end of the early MBA in the Levant, Amorite rulers appear to have governed most of its polities, as indicated in the Execration Texts.[58] Taken together with the Mari letters (1800–1762 BC) a century or so later, Amorite dynasties in the Levant are attested among the kingdoms of Yamḫad, Qatna, Byblos, Damascus, Hazor, and Ashkelon.[59] These dynasties began to take shape in the first century of the second millennium in Mesopotamia and by ca. 1800 BC Amorites ruled most of the Levant's urban centers. Even during the LBA at Ugarit, dynasties revealed their Amorite roots not only on the basis of the names of their rulers but also in the veneration of ancestral figures identified as Amorites.[60] By the mid-seventeenth century BC, an Amorite dynasty was even established in the eastern Egyptian Delta with its capital at Avaris (Tell ed-Dabʿa). The Hyksos (Fifteenth) Dynasty is identified as West Semitic through the names of its rulers.[61] While Egyptologists invoke the Egyptian term Asiatic (ꜥꜣmw), it masks the fundamental identity of this dynasty as Northwest Semitic, to which Amorite belongs, rather than more vaguely as Semitic or West Semitic (see Chapter 4).[62]

Cultural Memory and Invented Tradition: Social Identity

The identification of individuals, tribes, and rulers – even things – as Amorite provides an impressive body of evidence for the characterization of this period as the "age of Amorites." Such practices were limited, however, in their ability to cultivate a broader Amorite social and cultural identity like the one that prevailed during the MBA. Where the reach of these was limited, genealogies, treaties, and other rituals were employed to permit the further incorporation of individuals, whole communities, and confederacies into a sphere of Amorite cultural memory that effected the widest extent of the Amorite *oikoumene*.[63] These conventions provided a flexible medium for the transcendence of socioeconomic and political differences between Amorite groups as well as between Amorite and non-Amorite groups.

Fictive genealogies appear to have been a popular tool for inclusion within a broader and enduring identity as Amorite during the MBA. New dynasties

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[58] Redford 1992b. More recent reappraisals of the value of these texts or their actual date of origin are misleading. Amnon Ben-Tor's speculation concerning a third millennium context for the names appearing in the Execration Texts misunderstands the genre of execration texts, which seek precision with regard to detail in order that they may succeed in their objective (Ben-Tor 2006). For a useful characterization, see Seidlmayer 2001.

[59] Guichard 1997.

[60] Pardee 2011b: 25; Pardee 2002: 87–88.

[61] Redford 1992a: 106–11.

[62] Burke 2019.

[63] Ristvet 2014: 112–17.

sought legitimation through fictive Amorite lineages.[64] Piotr Michalowski has very appropriately referred to these as "genealogical charters."[65] The earliest such document was the Sumerian King List from Isin (see Chapter 4). But the Assyrian King List from Assur and the Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty from Babylon both functioned in a similar manner. The Assyrian King List was possibly authored during the reign of Shamshi-Adad (1813–1781 BC) in northern Mesopotamia.[66] In it Shamshi-Adad is identified with Akkadian kingship through his titles, with Amorite groups through genealogical descent, and with particular Assyrian cities as the protector of their sanctuaries.[67] The Amorite groups listed were identified as "kings who lived in tents" who can be identified as the eponymous founders of specific tribes, some of which are well-known Amorite tribes such as the Didanum and Hanum.

The most famous genealogy is that of Hammurapi (1792–1750 BC) of the First Dynasty of Babylon, who was connected with a series of Amorite tribes like the Hanum, Didanum, Amnanum, and Yaḫrurum.[68] A broader, if more explicit, association with the Amorites follows later in the text, where Hammurapi invites various "dynasties" or *palû* to a feast of the dead.

> The *palû* of the Amorites, the *palû* of the Haneans, the *palû* of Gutium, the *palû* not recorded on this tablet, and the soldier(s) who fell while on perilous campaigns for their (lit: "his") lord, princes, princesses, . . . all persons from East to West who have no one to tend or care for them, come ye, eat this, drink this, (and) bless Ammiṣaduqa, the son of Ammiditana, the king of Babylon. (GHD lns. 29–43)[69]

Kings of Larsa, Uruk, and Mari also explicitly identified with Amorite tribal affiliations.[70] Petty Amorite rulers are also identified with Sippar, Kish, and the dynasty of Mananā whose capital is unlocated.[71]

Michalowski has referred to this as an "Amorite ideology" and qualified this genre, which specifically invokes Amorite heritage as an example of a "'genealogical charter' for the legitimization of kingship":

> Tribal groupings, recognized for particular purposes, must have been quite fluid and the genealogical information within these groupings was probably adjusted to accommodate new situations. Kinship is, in

[64] Jonker 1995: 213–34.
[65] Michalowski 1983.
[66] Millard 1997.
[67] Yamada 1994: 14, and bibliography therein. Benno Landsberger suggested that it was originally composed during the reign of Shamshi-Adad (Landsberger 1954a).
[68] Finkelstein 1966.
[69] Translation by Ristvet 2014: 115.
[70] *RIME* 4 texts 2.4.1; 2.13.3; 4.1.2; also Michalowski 1983: 240–41; see also Fleming 2004: 249, n.31.
[71] Goddeeris 2005.

> many ways, a fiction, and there is ample documentation for the manipu-
> lability of genealogies to serve different ends. Thus, one should not
> expect the various manifestations of genealogical charters ... to be
> identical from situation to situation.[72]

That such charters, which fundamentally enshrined an imagined past, success-
fully served to legitimize a dynast, is an important point. This assertion implies,
however, that such claims to Amorite identity were often effective. In this
regard it is noteworthy that there do not appear to be any challenges to
individual efforts to lay claim to Amorite identity or claims that an individual
was not sufficiently Amorite to appropriate this heritage. At the root of this is
the realization that historical claims situated in the depth of history lacked
verifiability, if they were not also sometimes accepted without challenge.
Nevertheless, by the second half of the MBA, even the ability to speak the
Amorite language, for example, does not appear to have been regarded as
essential for claiming Amorite identity, even if it was locally useful.[73]

Such genealogies were "not just a matter of systematizing knowledge of the
past with the help of a convenient system of classification," Gerdien Jonker
notes.[74] Rather, they were associated with a specific function, often with
ritualized prayers as part of a ritual known as the *kispum*, which entailed calling
up past kings in order that they would bless the supplicant king. At Mari,
Lauren Ristvet observes that the *kispum* constituted an effort to advance
political unity and, as such, included feasting practices.[75] The Feast of Ishtar
and communal feasts, more generally, were mechanisms in the construction of
community identity, as highlighted in the Genealogy of the Hammurapi
Dynasty. Ristvet and others before her argue that this portion of the genealogy
probably related directly to the *kispum* ritual and that fragments of the
Sumerian King List from Tell Leilan, in northern Mesopotamia, should also
be seen as preserving such a tradition. Literary traditions such as "The Revolt
against Naram-Sin" and the Mari Eponym Chronicle as well as the later *Epic of
Zimri-Lim* may have been employed in funerary rituals of Shamshi-Adad and
Zimri-Lim, respectively. Similar traditions may have existed elsewhere, albeit
by other names.[76] Public spaces and courtyards around temples at sites such as
Ebla, likely served as the physical locus for many of the activities associated
with the performance of these feasts and sacrifices.

The net effect of "geneaological charters" and analogous rites was to add yet
another layer to the complex fabric of Amorite identity during the MBA,

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[72] Michalowski 1983.
[73] Streck 2000: 76–80.
[74] Jonker 1995: 223–31.
[75] Ristvet 2014: 92–152.
[76] Ibid.: 116.

revealing an invented tradition that created a means of participating in a shared cultural memory. Once more, while these rites are attested among some Amorite communities and often feature traditions stretching back to the third millennium, their significance was not an identification of such rites as exclusively Amorite. Rather, these rites very often involved the adaptation of earlier rites and practices. As such they served as a means of showcasing ties to legitimate rulers in the past, the value of affiliation with widely revered rulers such as Sargon and Gilgamesh, and a genealogical descent from Amorite tribal groups. For Amorite rulers, rites such as feasts, sacrifices, ritual pilgrimages for the gods, recitations of genealogies, the construction of burial monuments, and the celebration of the *kispum* served to tie them to local communities and widen perceptions of their legitimacy.

An Amorite Koine

With the emergence of Amorite rule and Amorite communities across much of the Near East during the early MBA, the potential for the appearance of shared traditions – and with them, common elements of material culture – among the assemblages of Mesopotamia, the Levant, Anatolia, and Egypt around 1800 BC is to be expected. To begin to consider the argument for the existence of this Amorite cultural koine, however, the use of the term "koine" in this work must be clarified. The term is traditionally employed by linguists, anthropologists, and historians to describe a common or shared language or culture.[77] The Greek word was first applied to a common dialect of Greek that was spoken by Alexander the Great's soldiers in the late fourth century BC. As a result of the interaction between his soldiers, who originated from different parts of Greece and consequently spoke different dialects of Greek, various processes such as dialect leveling led to the emergence of a new, common dialect: *koine* Greek.[78] The use of koine in this instance is valid because the contexts that brought about the development of koine Greek also brought about central cultural developments of the period, which were associated with the spread of Greek rule. Greek language was part of Hellenism, which emerged in the wake of Alexander's conquests. Hellenistic identity was a product not only of interactions between various Greek communities but was also shaped by interactions with non-Greek communities. The end result was the emergence of a wide range of shared customs that touched upon nearly every aspect of life, often defining what it meant to be identified as Greek, and this was enshrined in cultural institutions such as the theater and the gymnasium as well as government and cultic institutions.

[77] See Dietler 2017.
[78] Horrocks 1997: 4–6.

To employ koine to describe a common culture is to invoke the recognition of a range of common practices and their attendant institutions among what arguably remained – with different criteria – distinct cultural groups. With respect to Hellenistic culture it is now widely recognized that Hellenism aided Greek and non-Greek communities to develop a common social identity. In Alexander's kingdom, for example, it neither extinguished individual spoken dialects of Greek spoken by Alexander's soldiers nor did it eradicate long-entrenched local traditions and practices, whether sacred or profane, that were associated with non-Greek peoples. Local dialects, religious practices, culinary habits, and other customs that persisted as identities were negotiated through-out Greek-ruled territories.[79] Usually, Greeks – not unlike earlier Amorite rulers – were minorities within the territories they ruled.

By extension, in this study the existence of a cultural koine does not presume that all communities that identified as Amorite shared an identical set of customs, which would be to simply revive a trait-list approach to archaeological study of identity. It also does not require that by participating in this koine individuals or groups neglected other affiliations, ethnic, social, or political, nor that its wider association with Amorite rulers per se was neces-sarily their main interest in this affiliation. Rather, as with the Greek koine, the Amorite koine was malleable. It drew from a constellation of shared cultural traditions, and cannot be easily confined, therefore, to a single, core set or trait list of common characteristics that were present among all Amorite commu-nities. Nor is it possible to identify certain characteristics as essential for qualification as Amorite, such as spoken language. Thus, despite the wide geographic presence of Amorite communities across the Near East, Amorite identity as expressed by an Amorite from Babylon was not identical to that of an Amorite from Avaris, although similarities were more likely between neighboring regions and thus more conspicuous.

The mere existence of this koine, however, increasingly aided the move-ment of people across the Near East, particularly among Amorite communities during the first half of the second millennium. The result of these movements and exchanges was the further propagation of the Amorite koine during the second half of the MBA (ca. 1800–1550 BC). This, therefore, is not a checklist-oriented approach concerning the presence or absence of these cultural trad-itions among Near Eastern communities. Rather, the identification of these traditions exposes processes of "demand, rejection or indifference"[80] that were active within different Amorite communities. The discussion of the elements of the Amorite koine offered in this chapter serves as the basis for asking

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[79] This is now particularly acute in southern France as shown in the work of Michael Dietler (2005; 2010).
[80] Dietler 2010: 66–70.

questions concerning the nature of Amorite identities in this period and the very processes that contributed to similarities and differences between Amorite communities. Therefore, through the identification of an Amorite koine, a wide range of common artifacts and customs represent shared cultural traditions among widely dispersed Amorite communities.

It is often noted that during the OB Period three institutions dominated Mesopotamian society: the palace, the temple, and merchant guilds.[81] Each of these institutions, which are amply documented among textual sources for the period, certainly played an important role in many of the major developments from 1800 to 1550 BC, as already suggested in the preceding chapter. However, a broader perspective seems warranted given the wide dissemination of traditions that the textual and artifact evidence present. Indeed, by the eighteenth century BC many of the traditions and customs connected with elites during the first part of the second millennium had been emulated throughout social hierarchies, thus assuming an almost commonplace status.

The customs comprising this koine are particularly conspicuous among – although not restricted to – the arenas of kingship, warfare and conflict, temple and cult, and the maintenance of social order during this period, all of which reveal a distinctively monumental character. The centerpiece of the Amorite koine consisted of a variety of monuments that were not, in and of themselves, unique Amorite creations. Rather, these monuments, great and small, were often archetypes of earlier ages, which were appropriated within the framework of Amorite hegemony in unabashed efforts to legitimate Amorite rule. As James Osborne observes, the Latin root of monument, *monēre*, means "to remind," noting that monuments are "things that do, motionless objects that nevertheless possess an active force, accomplishing real work among those surrounding them." In the context of this study, his description of a monument frames well the consideration of the role that monuments played within Amorite communities. A monument constitutes a:

> suite of objects, that possesses an agreed-upon special meaning to a community of people. But since this meaning can never be immutable, we can only consider an object's monumentality in the context of its relationship to the community of which it forms a part.[82]

In this chapter, the "motionless work" of monuments is shown to have had an inscribing effect upon widely dispersed, Amorite-ruled communities. In this sense the effectiveness of monuments was not defined by their size. Rather, items as small as the ubiquitous cylinder seals of the period, with their highly standardized presentation scenes, for example, were as much monuments of

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[81] For example, Renger 1979.
[82] Osborne 2014b: 4.

the age as were fortifications, palaces, and temples, because they were able to effect the advancement of an ideology – in this case concerning kingship – in a conspicuous and highly standardized manner.

AMORITE KINGSHIP AND ITS TRADITIONS

Through appropriation and adaptation, Amorite rulers great and small played a prominent role in the propagation of a set of ideals that came to characterize Amorite kingship during the MBA. The choices that kings made echoed through large cadres of elites, whose practices emulated royal traditions at the household level. Likewise, the actions of these rulers had far-reaching implications for their subjects, as for example in the making of war, which led to the mustering of massive armies from across broad territories. Royal ideologies and traditions were more conspicuous than at any point earlier. The choices of royal households had far-reaching implications, not only locally but across neighboring and distant territories alike. Consequently, a discussion of kingship traditions is fundamental to identifying one of the most effective means by which this emerging koine was propagated.

The Ideal King

The ideals of kingship were embodied, in the first place, in the preeminent symbols of OB kingship. These are referenced, for example, in an inscription of Enlil-bani of Isin (1860–1837 BC):

> You wear on your head the . . . crown which evokes wonder. You are exalted to the farthest reach of the foreign land. You make (the land) peaceful. In the rebellious land you destroy the wall of the city that does not . . . at your command. You put them in fetters at your feet. I have entrusted to you, forever, the *enkara* weapon, the staff (and) sceptre of righteousness which guides the black-headed people.[83]

These symbols were also celebrated in hymns as, for example, in hymns to Rim-Sin I (1822–1763 BC), the king of Larsa, for whom we possess no explicit claim to Amorite identity, though he followed in the footsteps of Larsa's Amorite rulers:

> May An fix the holy crown on your head,
> May he fill your hands with the scepter of justice,
> May he bind to your body the mace which controls the people,
> May he make you grasp the mace which multiplies the people,
> May he open for you the shining udder of heaven, and rain down for you the rains
>   of heaven.[84]

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[83] *RIME* 4.10.1.1001, iv, 1–23.
[84] Translation by N. Postgate 1992: 261, after D. Charpin 1986: 275–76.

The royal emblems, which were entrusted to kings by the gods and can be traced back to the third millennium, consisted of the crown; the scepter, rod, or staff; the ring; and the throne or stool. The OB crown appears to have been a turban or a cap with a heavy band around it that became common during the late third millennium with Gudea and his successors, and possibly earlier among Akkadian kings. The "scepter of justice" and "righteousness" was associated with the "shepherdship of the nation."[85] The imagery of the king as shepherd of his people was a common title claimed by Amorite kings, and one also frequently used in reference to the gods.[86] "I am Hammurapi, the shepherd, selected by the god Enlil, he who heaps high abundance and plenty, who perfects every possible thing."[87]

Added to the scepter was the king's "mighty weapon," often a mace, and a ring, which is usually depicted in presentations scenes and may have represented a measuring line used in building. The throne, the symbolism of which is regarded in association with kings thereafter, features in presentation scenes, but also among royal inscriptions. Kings usually implored the gods to provide their thrones with a "secure foundation."[88] As such, the image of OB kingship had assumed an archetypal form to which kings sought to conform in word and deed. Whether through traditions like those attached to Sargon or Gilgamesh, which achieved near canonical status during the OB Period, or forms of palatial architectural and royal burial customs, an image of kingship was cultivated largely under Amorite aegis that served to legitimate rule by this minority of elites.

The construction of the image of the king was not, however, the sole domain of the king. Both the ideals, but also the limits, of kingship during the OB Period were laid out in the earliest version of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*,[89] which was known in Akkadian by the opening phrase: "Surpassing All Other Kings" (*šūtur eli šarrī*).

> Surpassing all other kings, heroic in stature,
> brave scion of Uruk, wild bull on the rampage!
> Going at the fore he was the vanguard,
> going at the rear, one his comrades could trust!
> . . .
> Gilgamesh the tall, magnificent and terrible,
> who opened passes in the mountains,
> who dug wells on the slopes of the uplands,
> and crossed the ocean, the wide sea to the sunrise;[90]

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[85] See *RIME* 4.3.7.3, 107–123; 4.2.11.1, v. 1–4.
[86] See now Garfinkle, "The Kingdom as Sheepfold."
[87] Prologue of the Laws of Hammurapi, I 50–62 (see Roth 1997: 77).
[88] For example, *RIME* 4.2.13.10, lns. 43–47.
[89] Tigay 1977.
[90] Tablet 1, lns. 29–40 in George 2003: 2.

Although these lines now fall later within the opening of the Standard Babylonian version of the epic, they emphasize, first and foremost, Gilgamesh's prowess as military leader and expeditionary of his city. These were key elements of OB royal rhetoric, with very archaic roots. During the Neo-Assyrian Period, the introduction had been much expanded, and while it is difficult to be certain which lines can be attributed to original OB versions, they memorialized the accomplishments of Gilgamesh as monument maker, building ramparts and a palace, and erecting commemorative stele[91] as well as titling him "shepherd" of Uruk.[92] Each of these attributes constitute the archetypal accomplishments regularly ascribed to OB kings in inscriptions. At some point in the first centuries of the second millennium BC, the epic was drafted, drawing upon various third-millennium Gilgamesh traditions, with some scholars even suggesting it to be the work of single author.[93]

Although it is unlikely that the epic was written by a single individual, this carefully crafted work gradually took the form of a unified narrative during the OB Period and is thus of paramount importance for what it reveals about broader perceptions of kingship in Mesopotamia and neighboring regions. Despite the kingly focus of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the locus of the production of literary traditions associated with Gilgamesh was not the palace but wealthy private households.[94] This reveals that the work of these scribes functioned to create a critique of kingship, as it was likely perceived by elite households of the period. In private scribal schools known in Sumerian as *edubba* (lit. "house of tablets"), hymns, narratives, and wisdom literature were preserved, in both Akkadian and Sumerian, serving to create a sense of Babylonian unity.[95] Although these elite households cannot be identified as Amorite, they provide, nonetheless, the basis for our perceptions of the idealization of kingship within Babylonian society and also a wider critique of kingship.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Niek Veldhuis argues that this process resulted in what can be called the invention of tradition by means of the recycling of older Sumerian traditions.[96] This process is significant for understanding the origins of the image of kingship since it implicates a broad array of elites in the perpetuation of an imagined past that focused on the accomplishments, some real and some fictive, of past rulers. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, in particular, Gilgamesh is portrayed as a valiant warrior, comrade, overreaching adventurer, tyrant, and yet a mortal. The *Epic* may have informed the genre that is behind traditions such as the so-called *Epic of Zimri-Lim*, which extoled the kingly

[91] Ibid.: 1–2, Tablet 1, lns. 9–28.
[92] Ibid.: 3, Tablet 1, ln. 71.
[93] Tigay 1982: 39–54.
[94] Veldhuis 2016.
[95] Veldhuis 1997: 24–25.
[96] Veldhuis 2004: 66–67.

virtues and accomplishments of the Amorite king Zimri-Lim of Mari.[97] He is lauded for his skill in battle as "the wild bull of battle" and "the one who readies his lance."[98]

In its OB form, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* was not a piece of propaganda as much as it was perhaps a critique of kingly conduct (see Chapter 4). Gilgamesh's actions toward nature, the gods, and the citizens of the "sheepfold of Uruk" were all viewed critically. Still, as king, Gilgamesh is portrayed in the ever-important roles as leader, warrior, expeditionary, and shepherd. While there is nothing inherently Amorite about the tradition, its construction and propagation during a period of Amorite rule across Mesopotamia fundamentally reveals its cultural value as a commentary on the ambitions and ultimate mortality of contemporary rulers.

Kingly Deeds

A king's accomplishments were particularly conspicuous in the construction of monuments, whether palaces, temples, waterworks, or the erection of commemorative stele. These and other monuments functioned to create a shared identity linking Amorite kings to past rulers, notably Akkadian kings. Year names, foundation inscriptions, and hymns proclaimed and commemorated these accomplishments and reminded their audiences exactly who was responsible for these monuments and the people's well-being. In a bid for legitimacy, kings therefore presented a distinctly royal ideology and sought to immortalize their memory in material terms through monument construction. In addition to the passive experiential effect that such monuments may have had on the subjects and neighbors of Amorite kings, these features allowed kings to incorporate their subjects into the "house" of the king through participation in the construction, maintenance, protection, and duplication of these monuments.

Among the king's duties was the management of irrigation programs, the construction of fortifications, fortresses, temples, and storehouses, and the rebuilding of cities as well as the leading of military campaigns. Inscriptions such as one belonging to Yaḫdun-Lim (1810–1794 BC) reveal the deployment of such achievements.

> Yaḫdun-Lim, son of Iaggid-Lim, king of Mari, Tuttul, and the land of Hana, mighty king, who controls the banks of the Euphrates – the god Dagan proclaimed my kingship (and) gave me a mighty weapon that fells my royal enemies. Seven kings, leaders of Ḫana, who had fought against me, I defeated, I annexed their lands. I removed the . . . of the banks of

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[97] Miglio 2017.
[98] Ibid., i, lns. 1 and 8.

the Euphrates and made my land dwell in peace. I opened canals and did away with the drawing of the water in my land. I built the wall of Mari and dug its moat. I built the wall of Terqa and dug its moat. Now in a waste, a land of thirst, in which from days of old no king had built a city, I took pleasure in building a city. I dug its moat [and] called it Dūr-Yaḫdun-Lim ("Fort Yaḫdun-Lim"). I opened a canal for it and called it Išīm-Yaḫdun-Lim ("Yaḫdun-Lim has determined (its) destiny"). I enlarged my land, established the foundations of Mari and my land, and established my fame until distant days. (As for) the man who removes my foundation deposits and puts his own foundation deposits (in their places). That man, whether he be a king or governor – may the gods Anum and Enlil inflict a terrible curse on him. May the god Shamash smash his weapon and the weapon of his army. May the gods Ashnan and Shakkan impoverish his land. May hostilities close the gate of his land and may battle keep raging in his land. As long as he lives may bad news daily confront his rule. May the gods Anum and Enlil be the bailiffs of his misfortune forever.[99]

This lengthy inscription from a cone from the palace of Yaḫdun-Lim, an early king of the Amorite dynasty at Mari, serves well to illustrate the character of the frequently celebrated accomplishments of rulers of this period, recorded on a wide variety of items from stele to tablets and bricks. The realignment of political and social order in the wake of the collapse of the Ur III Empire meant that the revitalization of urban centers required constant planning by successive rulers. In keeping with third millennium traditions, centuries later rulers like Yaḫdun-Lim emphasized their role as builders, not only of canals and fortification systems, but of entire settlements, palaces, and temples, and when they did not found settlements, they rebuilt the defenses of older towns.

Sometimes these royal deeds were inscribed on commemorative stele or *narû*, like their third-millennium predecessors. Yaḫdun-Lim claims this on inscribed bricks from Mari, for example,[100] while his contemporary Shamshi-Adad inscribed his deeds on stone tablets in which he claims to have "set up my great name and my monumental inscription (*narû*) in the land Lebanon on the shore of the Great Sea."[101] So important were such inscriptions that Shamshi-Adad declared that he had preserved those of the Akkadian king Manishtushu and invoked a curse against anyone who would damage his or his revered predecessor's inscriptions.

The monumental inscriptions and clay inscriptions of Maništūšu I swear I did not remove but [restored] to their [places]. I deposited

[99] *RIME* 4.6.8.1.
[100] *RIME* 4.6.8.2.
[101] *RIMA* 1.A.0.39.1., lns. 80–87.

[my monumental inscriptions and clay inscriptions . . .] beside his [monu-
mental inscriptions] and clay inscriptions.[102]

The stele of Dadusha (1800–1779 BC), king of Eshnunna, likewise, preserves as
220-line inscription along with illustrations of his military and other accom-
plishments.[103] He boasts with great detail concerning its craftsmanship and of
the specific reasons for its commissioning:

> (xii 1) Because of [. . .] (2) an eternal name [that I have had engraved on a
> stela]: (3) upon which (there is) an image of my heroism, (4) I as a slayer
> whose splendour of battle (5) in order to overwhelm the enemy land
> (6) is majestically set in place. (7) Above (on the stela) Sin and Shamash,
> (8) who strengthen my weapon, (9–10) appear radiantly in order to
> prolong the years of my reign. (11) Above the wall of Qabarā (12) (there
> is) Bunu-Eštar, the king of the land of Urbel, (13–14) whom I angrily
> bound with my strong weapon, (xiii 1) on whom he treads from above,
> (2) (and) stands in a lordly way. (3–5) Below (on the stela) (there are)
> raging warriors who attentively hold the bound (enemies). (6) (This is a
> stela) the stonecutter´s work on which has no rival, (9) that has been
> executed according to a preconceived plan (7) in skillful labour (8) by
> artisans, (10) that surpasses words of praise. (13) In order to maintain my
> well-being (11) day after day in front of Adad, (12) the god who created
> me, (14) (and thereby) to renew the destiny of my reign, (xiv 3) I truly
> erected (this stela) for all time (1) in Etemenhursag, the temple of Adad,
> (2) the god who raised me.[104]

By the early eighteenth century, Mesopotamian rulers systematically employed
monumental inscriptions, whether on clay and stone cones, cylinders, bricks,
and tablets, or *narû*, as a means of trumpeting their accomplishments and
asserting their legitimacy. While this process may have been neither exclusive
to Amorite rulers nor unique to this period, under Amorite rule a predictably
formulaic approach to this tradition played a central role in the propagation of
the legitimacy of Amorite kings. It is unsurprising that the primary elements of
a koine material culture that reached its zenith around 1800 BC should issue
from the visible accomplishments of the rulers of the age. Urban centers, as the
seats of royal power, served as the central loci in the perpetuation of this koine
during the second half of the MBA. The location of palaces, temples, and
burial grounds within fortified urban centers reveals the existence of ideal types
appropriated by these rulers, as they modeled themselves on the accomplish-
ments and claims of earlier rulers and engaged in competitive emulation of
their peers within the Amorite *oikoumene*.

[102] *RIMA* 1.A.0.39.2.
[103] Van Koppen 2006: 98–102; Rollinger 2017.
[104] Rollinger 2017: 207.

The Palace

Within urban centers, the palace was the seat of dynastic power and the locus of the construction of Amorite royal identity. Palaces varied in scale, largely depending on whether or not they were the home of a king, a queen, a vassal, or a governor (Figure 5.2). Scale not only affected total size, but also the elaboration of the physical plan of a palace. The larger a palace a king could construct, the more elaborate were its features. This, perhaps more than any other aspect, reveals the nature of competitive emulation that governed so much of palace–to–palace interaction during the MBA. The construction of a palace was therefore an event often celebrated among Amorite kings.[105]

> Sin-kashid
> mighty man,
> king of Uruk,
> king of the Amnanum,
> provider of Eanna,
> when he built Eanna,
> he built his royal palace.[106]

Despite their variations and overall dimensions there can be little doubt that MBA palaces across the Fertile Crescent shared in a lengthy tradition of architecture and style. Examples of MBA palaces are attested in Mesopotamia at Mari, Tuttul, Eshnunna, Qattara (Tell al-Rimah),[107] Uruk, and Ur, and in the Levant at Qatna and Alalakh (Figure 5.2), and recently at Avaris, the Hyksos capital.[108]

Because of the centrality of courtyards in their design, the general layout of these buildings is effectively that of the courtyard–style house writ large. As enormous houses, specific activities were conducted in the purpose-built spaces within these complexes. The palace was where kings entertained envoys in their bids for power and to secure alliances, and it is unsurprising that the courtyard played an important role in these efforts. Laʾum, Zimri–Lim's emissary to Babylon, related: "We entered to take a meal in Hammurapi's [king of Babylon] presence, moving into the Palace Court."[109] Visits to palaces were a part of courtly life and such exchanges made visible one of the principal means by which both imitation and innovation occurred during the MBA. They were also the loci of the exchanges resulting from royal marriages, which undoubtedly contributed to exchanges of a variety of traditions as entourages

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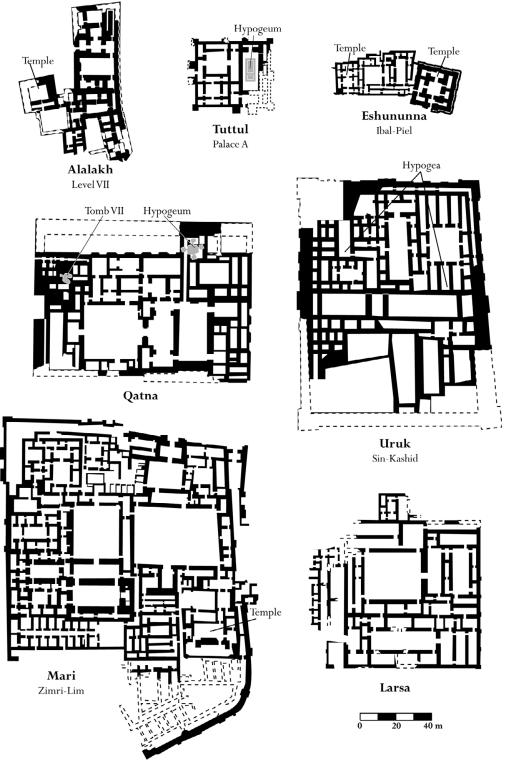
[105] Palace builders, as attested among inscriptions, include the kings of Isin: Lipit-Ishtar (*RIME* 4.1.5.1) and Enlil–Bani (*RIME* 4.1.10.9) as well as Abi-Sare of Larsa (*RIME* 4.2.6.2), Sin-Kashid of Uruk (*RIME* 4.4.1.2), and Sharrum-kima-kalima of Razama (*RIME* 4.26.1).

[106] *RIME* 4.4.1.5.

[107] Oates 1972.

[108] Bietak, Math, Müller, et al. 2012.

[109] ARM 2 76 (LAPO 16 404), translated by Sasson 2015: 1.6.b.i.

Temple

Alalakh
Level VII

Hypogeum

Tuttul
Palace A

Temple   Temple

Eshununna
Ibal-Piel

Tomb VII   Hypogeum

Qatna

Hypogea

Uruk
Sin-Kashid

Temple

Mari
Zimri-Lim

Larsa

0   20   40 m

5.2 Palaces of Mesopotamia and the Levant, ca. 1800–1600 BC.
Illustration by Amy Karoll

left one palace to reside in another.[110] In one letter written to Zimri-Lim, king of Mari, the ruler of Yamḫad remarked that the king of Ugarit wished to visit the palace of Mari:

> To Zimri-Lim communicate the following: thus says your brother Hammurapi (of Yamḫad): The king of Ugarit has written me as follows: "Show me the palace of Zimri-Lim! I wish to see it." With this same courier I am sending on his man.[111]

Zimri-Lim, likewise, visited the palace at Ugarit,[112] and rebuilt the palace of Alahtum, which is identified with Alalakh.[113]

These exchanges reveal a leading mechanism behind the imitation and elaboration on central elements among palatial design and décor. In an effort to identify shared aspects, whether in palatial architecture or décor, it becomes clear, however, that trait-list inspired approaches overlook why and the extent to which these palaces and their ornamentation conformed to an ideal type during this period. This is complicated, for example, by the fact that styles were often adapted for particular locations or constructed according to available resources, and thus reflected limitations, local tastes, and traditions, which are not immediately recognized today. Imitation, but also local innovations, were aspects of this process.

Because of their designs and amenities as royal domiciles, the palace was the locus of the projection of legitimacy, conspicuous consumption, and competitive emulation. Zimri-Lim, for example, boasts of building an icehouse at Mari,[114] presumably an extension of the palace grounds. In the Levant, in particular, not only location, but elevation also marked the placement of palaces.[115] Tripartite reception suites also appear to form a constituent element of many palaces.[116] Elaborate gates or doors, burial crypts, and murals, among other elements, were aspects of palace construction that permitted an opportunity for local regents to show how they adopted and adapted particular traditions.[117]

Central elements of palatial traditions during the MBA were the adornment of palaces with elaborate, painted wall decoration or murals. Although the messages conveyed by these varied, their employment reveals a common environment of conspicuous consumption by elites, which was often, as

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[110] Malamat 1997.
[111] Translated by Gates 1984: 70 from French by Dossin in Schaeffer 1939: 16n1.
[112] Villard 1986.
[113] Lauinger 2015: 117.
[114] *RIME* 4.6.12.2003.
[115] Kallas 2017: 144–48.
[116] Ibid.: 148–50.
[117] ARM 13 7 (LAPO 16 126).

previously highlighted, the result of competitive emulation.[118] In Mesopotamia this was an extension, if writ large, of the iconographic repertoire and symbology of seal carving during the OB Period.[119] In the Levant, construction incorporated craftsmen and traditions from the eastern Mediterranean.

Examples of murals have been excavated in palatial and patrician contexts in Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Egypt. Most of them, as will be discussed, feature motifs that can be qualified as royal scenes or natural landscapes, but the presence of elaborate painted wall and floor decorations justifies a broad category of murals that represent the employment of specialized artists in the ornamentation of elite residences. Some of the scenes served to propagate royal ideologies through a selection of scenes, often with clear parallels among earlier traditions. Bull-leaping scenes at Avaris, dolphins at Qatna, hunting scenes at Tell el-Burak, and investiture scenes at Mari are among a number of murals recovered from MBA elite contexts. The variety of their production styles and techniques as well as the motifs and scenes they depict reveal the varied cultural connections that these rulers accessed and the prestige associated with these connections. Consequently, regional traditions exist within the broader category of murals.

Until now each of the mural exemplars has been primarily treated with emphasis on the distinct artistic and technological characteristics that they exhibit.[120] Discussions traditionally center on the cultural influences they reveal, which are labeled either as Aegean, Egyptian, or Mesopotamian, with the first two types appearing within the Levant, while those farther to the east reveal a more limited contact with the Mediterranean world and drew, instead, upon local iconographic influences. Nonetheless, the contemporaneous production of murals, their distribution in distinct geographic groupings, and their correlation with the residences of Amorite rulers suggest that mural production within elite residences by the second half of the MBA represents a common phenomenon with regional variations, which were the direct result of competitive emulation in the employment of artisans.

The fundamental significance of the display of power through the mural tradition is revealed in the murals of the Great Royal Palace at Mari (Tell Hariri; see Figure 5.2). The centerpiece of this mural is the so-called investiture of Zimri-Lim, which is located at the entrance to the throne room and shows Zimri-Lim receiving the traditional symbols of Mesopotamian kingship, the ring (measuring line?) and the staff (or scepter), from the gods (Figure 5.3). The scene, like other wall décor at Mari, is executed as a painting, not a fresco.

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[118] Morandi Bonacossi 2014a: 420; Kallas 2017: 151–52.
[119] Collon 1987: 44–57.
[120] Bietak 2007a.

5.3 Wall mural of investiture of Zimri-Lim at Mari.
Photograph: Marie-Lan Nguyen. Public domain

The investiture as a subject reveals the direct relationship between the mural tradition and the legitimation of kingship.[121] These scenes were not, however, the only murals at Mari. Around courtyard 106 to the north of the throne room were two scenes illustrating sacrifices, processions of men, depictions of Shamshi-Adad as builder, lion tamer, and war hero triumphant over fallen enemies.[122]

A second strand of mural tradition included Aegean and Egyptian styles, which were identified at a number of sites in the Levant and Egypt during the second half of the MBA. In the Levant, actual fresco and fresco-style depictions were employed in the "reinvention of Levantine kingdoms."[123] As a group, their appearance during the second half of the MBA in elite buildings,[124] not all of which are to be identified as palaces, reveal a shared taste for murals, yet with regionally distinct variations that likely reflect zones of interaction and perceptions of prestige and exotica. In the Levant and Egypt, some murals were executed in true fresco technique, revealing access to skilled artisans from the Aegean or who were certainly trained there. Among these are murals at

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[121] Margueron 2014: 152–53.
[122] Ibid.: 152.
[123] Feldman 2007.
[124] Winter 2000: 747–49.

Avaris, Alalakh, Qatna, Tel Kabri, and Tell Sakka,[125] which compose "a coherent group according to their shared technique of execution, motival repertoire, and style of depicting this repertoire," each being executed in true fresco technique.[126] At Tell Burak, on the other hand, the plaster wall paintings appear to have been executed in an Egyptian style with uncertainty about the degree to which actual fresco technique was employed, though by contrast with the other exemplars they clearly date to the early MBA.[127] Although the mural fragments from Qatna are dated to the end of the early LBA (ca. mid-fourteenth century BC), they are a clear vestige of this tradition.[128] While there are "several motifs and stylistic elements that are clearly Aegean and not Syrian," the Qatna fragments "only imitate and never completely follow the prevailing Aegean conventions."

> The use of Aegean motifs and technology for the wall paintings at Qatna are not only to be understood as part of the Late Bronze Age supra-regional communication, but must also be seen as a revolution that started in the MBA. Aegean goods and influences were already established in Syria by the MBA as a symbol for people with an elevated social status. . . . The king of Qatna, thus, chose an iconography that had been used since the MBA to express an elite status in Syria and underlined his legitimization as ruler of the city state. Whether Aegean craftsmen really participated in the production process did not seem to be all that important.[129]

Owing to the fact that palace wall paintings of the MBA in Mesopotamia offer no evidence of exotic and foreign influences, having not been produced in fresco technique and showing no evidence for the inclusion of Aegean motifs and styles, no meaningful link has yet been made between these palace murals and the ones previously mentioned. Rather, the Mari paintings have been viewed primarily through the restrictive lens of eastern traditions with no specific relationship to those of MBA palaces in the west. However, in the context of the contemporaneous developments in palace mural production identified at other Amorite centers such as Alalakh, Tel Kabri, and Avaris, their reconsideration as symbols of Amorite prestige is warranted. They were, in fact, part of a process of competitive emulation among predominantly Amorite rulers. While factors such as distance might have mostly eliminated Mediterranean influence on the production of Mari's palace murals, it is also likely that some degree of temporal separation contributed to an evolving

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[125] Bietak, Marinatos, and Palivou 2007; Woolley 1955: 228–32; von Rüden 2011; Niemeier and Niemeier 2002; Taraqji 1999.
[126] Feldman 2007: 42.
[127] van Ess, Bertsch, and Verhey 2018.
[128] von Rüden 2017.
[129] von Rüden 2011: 8.

process whereby a given ruler sought to outdo the most recent murals of which he was aware. The request by the king of Ugarit to view Zimri-Lim's palace, for example, suggests not only the context for such visits, but underscores that the palace was the venue of diplomatic meetings between kings, who addressed each other as "brothers."

Palaces during this period, and increasingly so in later periods, became material contexts for the exchange of influences, the borrowing and adaptation of ideas. This was no less true concerning connections between the Aegean and the Levant, than it was between the Near Eastern palaces of MBA rulers. Murals served therefore as canvases for the inscribing of symbols of power. In this regard, Feldman observes that,

> the presence of frescoes in these buildings strengthens the theory that they operated within a shared cultural realm and, moreover, that they served similar sociopolitical purposes and were received and deployed within a shared system of values that was, however, distinct from the values of the Aegean.[130]

That the appearance of wall paintings in the Near East during the MBA can be so frequently identified with the palaces of Amorite rulers is therefore significant.

The location of the employment of wall paintings in the Levant, as in Mesopotamia, is also significant as it has been suggested to be more restrictive than in the Aegean, where such paintings occur in a wide variety of buildings.[131] While there can be little doubt, as Feldman observes, that these frescoes were employed in an "intimate association with the group in power and with the establishment of authority in general," the emulation of rulers by a wider set of elites is already in evidence during the early MBA. Location as well as scale are the central factors in identifying most of these buildings containing murals as palaces, and yet not all of these buildings fit these criteria. Mural-decorated buildings at Tell el-Burak and Tel Kabri, I suggest, should be identified as elite or patrician residences rather than as palaces. As concerns the identification of Bronze Age structures in the Levant as palaces the leading characteristics must be their location and layout, and, only secondarily, their size. Tell el-Burak's plan is that of a fort and should not be identified as a royal palace, as it shares effectively nothing in common with palaces.[132] The building in the lower city at Kabri, too, lacks the single most important characteristic of Levantine palaces without exception, for those constructed during the MBA and LBA, namely a windward, specifically western, location at the site.

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[130] Feldman 2007: 52.
[131] Winter 2000: 747–49.
[132] Burke 2008: 192.

Without this, the building may instead be identified simply as the residence of a wealthy merchant. The palace is likely located below the western side of the high mound.[133]

Within the emerging Amorite kingdoms of the MBA the palace was "the ideal, perhaps even imperative locus for any 'reinvention' processes undertaken by the MBA Levantine rulers" and that such frescoes appear predominantly at the end of the MBA is appropriately characterized by Feldman as signaling "the consolidation of power and the expression of this power at its height."[134] As she observes, the selection of exotica and themes appearing among these murals were part of "a complicated kaleidoscope of both competing and shared interests among the kingdoms" where intensive competition accounts for the architectural and stylistic differences between these palaces.[135] It appears therefore that elaborate, often exotic-styled, mural production was an artistic manifestation of the cosmopolitan ideologies of Amorite elites – both kings and non-royals – that is distinguished by its varied regional styles and production. The presence of these murals in Near Eastern buildings is, in fact, a bellwether of the fluorescence of a koine among elites whose predominant political and social affiliations were Amorite.

Royal Burials

Burial grounds were of fundamental importance and the care and commemoration of deceased ancestors was central to an Amorite ideology during the MBA. As such, they afforded opportunities not just for the maintenance of the social memory of the dead, but also the opportunity for the living royalty to be incorporated into a larger body of deceased ancestors. Rim-Sin I of Larsa boasts of his efforts in Ur concerning care for those he describes as "gone to their destiny":

> I, by my great wisdom, sought, for the future, places (of those who would go to their) destiny. I established a broad sacred area surpassing the graveyard of the former *en* priestesses. I surrounded that ruined place with a wall, established a strong watch, and purified that place.[136]

Rituals surrounding the burial of kings were highly developed. Despite challenges in understanding how they differed, they generally reveal a veneration for ancestors, which meant that these burial rites perpetuated a ruler's efforts –

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[133] See Yasur-Landau et al 2015.
[134] Feldman 2007: 59.
[135] Ibid.: 60.
[136] *RIME* 4.2.14.20, lns. 38–43.

after death – to legitimate themselves by being officially placed in a line of succession with kings of old.[137]

A central element of royal households during the MBA was the practice of dynastic burial below the palace. Royal hypogea served as family crypts for the burial of members of the household over multiple generations and served as the locus for ritual activities connected with the commemoration of previous rulers. Edgar Peltenburg has even suggested that from the third to the second millennium "palaces with their royal tombs became the new funerary monuments."[138] Hypogea are attested under palaces at Qatna, Ebla, and Uruk.[139] The practice was not conceptually dissimilar to other forms of intramural residential burial of family members.[140] The broader type to which royal hypogea may be assigned have been called residential funerary chambers, which functioned to preserve social memory. Situating the widespread appearance of this practice at the start of the second millennium BC, Nicola Laneri connects the frequency of this type with aspects of mobility inherent in the lives of individuals, especially merchants, during this period when efforts were made to maintain social bonds through the memorialization of dead ancestors.[141] During the MBA, these traditions were associated with members of Mesopotamian and Levantine society, even as they carried their practices into neighboring regions as evident, for example, at Avaris in the Egyptian Delta.[142]

Among the best examples of this burial tradition are a number of such structures associated with Amorite dynasties of the MBA (see Figure 5.2). In Uruk, at least two vaulted burial chambers built of mudbrick were identified below the palace of Sin-kashid.[143] More recently, however, the burial complex below the palace of the Middle and Late Bronze Age at Qatna serves as the best example of the location of the hypogeum below the palace (Figure 5.4).[144] The excavations at Qatna permit a thorough articulation of this burial practice stretching from the MBA to the LBA,[145] and suggest a basis for the existence of an ideal type for royal burials during this period.[146]

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[137] Postgate 1992: 270–71; Ristvet 2014: 114.
[138] Peltenburg 2008: 236.
[139] This may also describe the context of the MBA royal burials at Byblos.
[140] See Mazar 1990: 214. One might argue that in principle it was quite common during the MBA to seek the burial of family members within such a context whenever circumstances permitted and that, in fact, extenuating circumstances likely contributed to extramural burial practices, notably in burial caves (ibid.: 213).
[141] Laneri 2014: 7–8.
[142] Forstner-Müller 2002; Forstner-Müller 2008; Forstner-Müller 2010.
[143] These include burial 52 below Room 57 and burials 54 and 59 below Room 74 (Lenzen and Haller 1963: 35–36).
[144] Pfälzner 2011c: esp. 71, Abb. 3.
[145] Pfälzner 2011b; Pfälzner 2012a.
[146] For example, contributions in Pfälzner 2011d and Pfälzner 2012b.
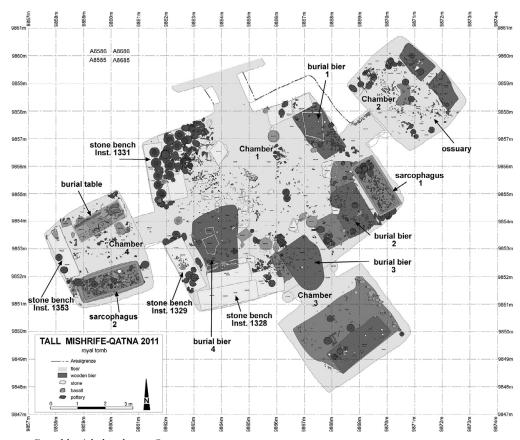
5.4 Royal burial chamber at Qatna.
Source: Pfälzner 2012:207, fig. 1. Reproduced courtesy of Peter Pfälzner
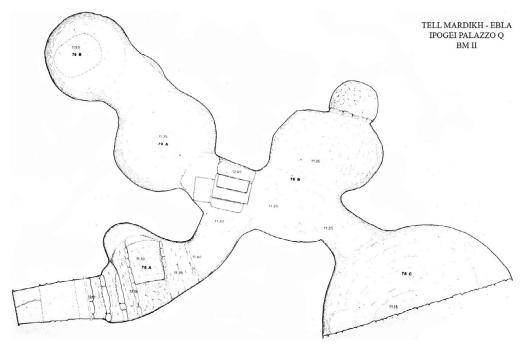
This burial complex provides evidence for both primary and secondary burial crypts, which according to the datable evidence originated at the start of the MBA and persisted in use through the LBA, when the palace was finally destroyed.[147] The overall shape and layout with a central chamber (1) and side chambers (2–4) in which stone benches, burial tables, ossuaries and sarcophagi were employed are also echoed among non-royal burial caves throughout the Levant during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

At Ebla, these and other tombs have been identified below palatial structures in areas B, C, G, and Q. Their locations suggest that the same principles of burial practice likely guided the choice of the burial of not only kings, but also elites and officials.[148] Ebla's excavator has proposed that together with the buildings above these tombs, these complexes functioned within a cult of royal

[147] Pfälzner 2014.
[148] Matthiae 2013e.

5.5 Plan of three hypogea in Area Q at Ebla dated ca. 1850–1700 BC.
Source: Matthiae 1980. Reproduced courtesy of the Ebla expedition

ancestors.[149] The best known of these structures – the Tomb of the Lord of the Goats and the Tomb of the Princess in Area Q (Figure 5.5) – embody the hypogeum tradition.[150] In attempting to interpret the mortuary evidence afforded by these burials, it is important to remember that Ebla was not the capital of a kingdom during this period but was under the kingdom of Yamḫad, and for this reason the exact characterization of these burials remains uncertain. Yet their identity as elites is without doubt based upon the wealth of findings in the tombs. Consequently, it is likely these burials belonged to elites who were subordinate to the rulers of the kingdom of Yamḫad, to which Ebla belonged, if not to cult officiants in this cult center, which Ebla might represent.

Such an interpretation may explain the less elaborate nature and less formal character of the burial complex than that of the royal hypogeum at Qatna. This may likewise have affected the degree of emulation evident or its absence among certain so-called palatial traditions at Ebla since the connections of the local rulers of Ebla were, presumably, not those of the Amorite dynasties centered on Qatna, Yamḫad, Ugarit, and Mari. Nevertheless, an ideal type is discernible in which elites sought burial within the city and below their

[149] Matthiae 1979b.
[150] Matthiae 2013h; Matthiae 2013e.

residences in a family crypt. The burials of many of the members of the wider communities to which these elites belonged demonstrate that these practices were fairly widespread among the populace, and together they reveal an ideology centered on the relationship of the living with the dead.

The Art of War and Peace

Warfare – an embodiment of culture and customs – was a major endeavor of Amorite rulers, playing a significant role in the establishment of Amorite power and the cultivation of an Amorite *oikoumene*. The effects of warfare were felt widely across Near Eastern communities, impacting every level of the social hierarchy and extensively shaping MBA political and economic landscapes.[151] We can look again to an inscription of Yaḫdun-Lim of Mari, as an example of the breadth of these activities.

> In that same year, – Laʾum, king of Samānum and the land of the Ubrabium, Bahlukullim, king of Tuttul and the land of the Amnānum, Aiālum, king of Abattum and the land of the Rabbum – these kings rebelled against him. The troops of Sūmû-Epuh of the land of Yamḫad came as auxiliary troops (to rescue him) and in the city of Samānum the tribes gathered together against him, but by means of (his) mighty weapon he defeated these three kings of . . . He vanquished their troops and their auxiliaries and inflicted a defeat on them. He heaped up their dead bodies. He tore down their walls and made them into mounds of rubble. The city of Haman, of the tribe of Haneans, which all the leaders of Hana had built, he destroyed and made into mounds of rubble. Now, he defeated their king, Kasuri-Hāla. Having taken away their population he controlled the banks of the Euphrates.[152]

The inscription recounts rebellion, the formation of alliances, the defeat of a coalition and their casualties, the destruction of their cities, and the deportation of the defeated. Similar achievements are frequent among the inscriptions of Amorite rulers such as Shamshi-Adad of Assyria and Hammurapi of Babylon. It is noteworthy that a king's lauded achievements even included the destruction of his rival's monuments, undermining efforts by others to legitimate their rules.

Alliances were one means of addressing the security concerns of the period, inasmuch as they made possible major offensives against rival states. The major powers and the consequent alliances are revealed in the letter from the king of Mari cited earlier. Nevertheless, all too often alliances were formed as stratagems for the eventual conquest of rivals and neighbors in a bid for the coveted

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[151] Charpin 2004: 285–93.
[152] *RIME* 4.6.8.2, lns. 67–91.

title of "king of the four corners," a title sought by rulers since the late third millennium.

Armies were levied through conscription for summertime service, which included long-distance campaigns, resulting either in the meeting of a coalition in open battle or the siege of cities across a territory.[153] Conscription occurred within the context of mandatory labor service to the palace, known as *ilkum*. Consequently, armies consisting of tens of thousands of troops were conscripted from the able-bodied men of communities across a broad swath of the territories of a king and his allies.[154] This, of course, put individuals from across different social classes into contact with the members of geographically distant communities, and added to multi-factor mobilization of individuals across all social classes during this period.

Although they occurred, few open battles are attested, and siege warfare, which is a frequent focus of warfare, assumed a fairly regularized if extremely violent form.[155] Siege warfare meant that the construction of fortifications reached an apogee in the Near East that, arguably, was not to be improved upon until the Middle Ages. Fortifications also provided the frame within which urban planning was undertaken. As in the inscription of Yaḫdun-Lim of Mari referenced previously, the construction of the fortifications of a city was a major event in a ruler's reign. Hammurapi, for example, also reveled in his construction of the wall of Sippar as commanded to him by the god Shamash in order that he might "settle the people of Sippar and Babylon in peaceful abodes:"

> . . . with the levy of the army of my land, I raised the top of the foundation of the wall of Sippar with earth (until it was) like a great mountain. I built (that) high wall.[156]
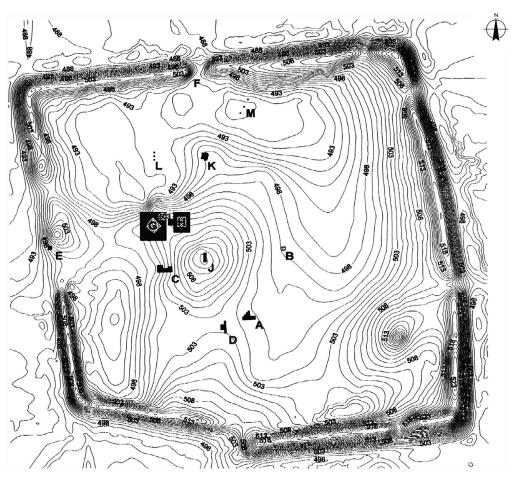
In light of the dominance of siege warfare and the requirements it placed on the construction of defenses, it is unsurprising that fortifications assumed a fairly standard form and appearance during the MBA. Fortifications usually included massive earthen ramparts, intended to raise the base of the wall above the level of the plain at or near which the city's foundations lay (Figure 5.6). This may have been more common in the Levant and northern Mesopotamia than in the south. But whether or not earthen ramparts were employed, the settlement's circumference was girded with a thick mudbrick wall studded with towers and pierced by fortified gates to serve each of the major quarters of

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[153] Charpin 2007: 279–82.
[154] Sasson 2015: 191–92. Armies are attested with as many as 30,000 on one side. See also Abrahami 1992: 157–61.
[155] Burke 2008: 31–46.
[156] *RIME* 4.3.6.2.

5.6 Plan of the fortifications of Qatna revealing locations of gates within depressions in ramparts. *Source:* Burke 2008: 214, fig. 44. Illustration by author.
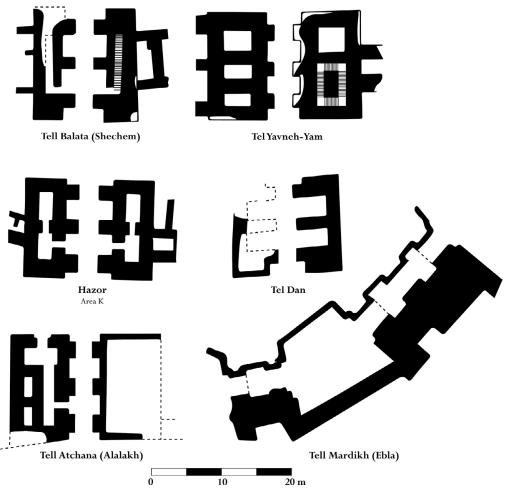
the town (Figure 5.7).[157] In their inscriptions, kings referred to constructing or rebuilding these fortifications as "raising the head" of the fortifications. That victories against fortified cities were regarded among the major achievements of rulers is reflected in their celebration among royal year names by which specific years within their reigns were identified.

> Year Samsu-iluna the king, by the order of An and Enlil, destroyed the city walls of Ur and Uruk and for the x-th time smote by weapons the troops of Akkad.[158]

By ca. 1800 BC, fortifications across the Near East had achieved a highly consistent form, employing straight wall segments along which towers were
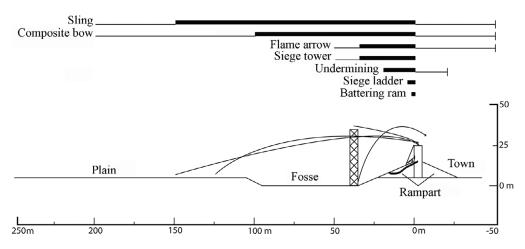
5.7 Middle Bronze Age gates in the Levant.
Illustration by Amy Karoll

added to enable the defenders to fire upon all areas of the base of the wall, in order to repulse the use of battering rams and ladders that had become mainstays of siege warfare (Figure 5.8). The walls were constructed of unfired mudbricks and were usually between 5 and 10 m thick among larger sites, but still over 2 m wide among even the smallest of fortified settlements. Often in the Levant and northern Mesopotamia, dry moats or fosses were incorporated into the defenses. Excavated during the course of creating the earthen ramparts, the fosse added to the total height of the defenses and aided in deterring the approach of siege towers, which required level ground close to the fortifications in order to serve as effective firing platforms against the defenders atop the city's wall (Figure 5.8). It should come as little surprise then that the technology of warfare, not only its fortifications but also the panoply, took on a highly standardized form across the Fertile Crescent during this period.

5.8 Ranges of weapons employed in siege warfare, ca. 2500–1550 BC.
Illustration by author.

The wide variety of weapons are referenced among the Mari letters and also witnessed in the archaeological records across Mesopotamia, the Levant, and southern Anatolia, notably among burial assemblages.[159]

While the military concerns that lead to their development and refinement from the mid-third to the mid-second millennium BC are made unambiguous through texts, an apparent decrease in military activity following the death of Samsuiluna of Babylon (1711 BC) meant that the maintenance of these features may have been increasingly seen as more symbolic than necessary.[160] The form and style, while possessing an inherent functional value, became as much a reflection of kingly status – the ability to mobilize large labor forces as it was an act of legitimation by the "good shepherd" who looked after his people.[161] Gilgamesh, builder of the walls of Uruk, served, in this respect, as an archetypal figure once again.

In the inscription quoted at the outset of this section, Yaḫdun-Lim boasts that he "opened canals and did away with the drawing of the water" in the kingdom. Numerous royal inscriptions and year names are dedicated to the digging of canals as a major accomplishment of OB kings, even among those who did not claim Amorite identity.[162] While these statements are significant in their reflection of the essential importance of access to water, they are also significant in light of the need for reliable water in times of crises as much as

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[159] See Sasson 2015: 198–99; Philip 1989.
[160] Burke 2008: 96.
[161] Ibid.: 153–55.
[162] Warad-Sin of Larsa (*RIME* 4.2.13.25); Rim-Sin I of Larsa (*RIME* 4.2.14.13, etc.); Hammurapi (*RIME* 4.3.6.1, etc.); Samsuiluna (*RIME* 4.3.7.7); and Abi-eshuh of Babylon (*RIME* 4.3.8.1), etc.

during peacetime. In much of Mesopotamia such royal initiatives focused on the management of canal systems, events celebrated in royal inscriptions and year names. Water security was as important in the Levant, largely due to the concerns of siege warfare, despite the fact that rainfall was greater than in most of Mesopotamia. Although we do not have direct references to the efforts of the crown in the Levant during the MBA, the archaeological remains of water systems indicate that significant resources were invested in hewing water systems through bedrock in order to expand access to water for their fortified communities. Such systems were common throughout the Levant, as attested at Jerusalem and Hazor.[163] Similar efforts were also evidently made on the island of Dilmun to access and secure fresh water.

Altogether warfare and its associated paraphernalia impressed itself upon the collective experience of the region's inhabitants through a monumental scale all its own. Wall-topped ramparts and gateways created a standard appearance for urban centers, casting long shadows over the landscape, and offered a shared experience to urban inhabitants, elites and non-elites alike. Gateways served as market places around which the town's inhabitants congregated and these public spaces hosted many of the *narû* stele mentioned in ancient sources, which, as in the case of Hammurapi's stele, were looted as trophies of war or defaced and destroyed. The fortifications themselves were, however, a statement writ large of royal power.[164]

Warfare also involved extensive logistical efforts and supply lines, impacting populations in regions far from the theater of operations, as the Mari letters make clear:

> Is there enough water for the armies to drink? The armies that will go are vast. There will be 20,000 that will go, including donkeys, donkey handlers, army guides; will (water) be enough? If you have not yet determined the water supply for these routes, a decision (to go) must not be made. There are Ubrabu-tribesmen who have experienced these routes, send out these people – who have experienced these routes – so that they could determine nicely for you the water supply for these routes.[165]

The requirements of such operations led to expeditionary efforts to procure additional resources, such as timber for the construction of siege works, and the supply of bronze for weaponry.[166] Military activity frequently resulted in a domino-effect of movements of men and materials across vast distances, mobilizing extensive exchange networks and supply lines. A well-structured

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[163] Burke 2008: 72–73.
[164] Finkelstein 1992; Ristvet 2007.
[165] ARM 1 85+ (LAPO 17 449), see Sasson 2015: 201.
[166] Ibid.: 198–99.

plan for conscription was essential to such operations. In the extract from the reign of Hammurapi of Babylon cited earlier, he claims that he constructed his fortifications through the "levy of the army of my land," reminding us that among the achievements that kings demonstrated in war was the ability to mobilize labor to defeat or defend against an enemy, to construct fortifications, and to lead their conscripts great distances to levy a siege against the capitals of other states – feats of prowess widely identified with legendary figures such as Gilgamesh and Sargon.

The resettlement of captives, deportees, and refugees were also an obvious result of the constant warfare that plagued this period, and these contributed in a profound way to demographic changes. The situation with war captives is perhaps an obvious result of the warfare endemic to the MBA.[167] The Mari letters shed light on a series of practices related to the distribution of prisoners of war, which were regarded equal to war booty (*šallatum*). The conspicuous examples of this practice concern the filling of particular stations with captives, such as singers and enslaved males and females, by the king or his adminis-trators.[168] That this was not uncommon is conveyed by the many attestations of ransoms paid for the freeing of captives.[169] Deportations and refugees, by contrast, uprooted whole communities from one region to another and were not exclusive to later imperial periods, but likewise contributed to substantial movements of populations. The Mari letters expose the significance of deport-ation in the movement of entire communities and the resettlement of soldiers.

> We have consulted and, since this land cannot be brought under control, I moved the (population) of that land, settling the (population) of that land in the lands of Arraphum and Qabra, men and women. The troops will find discharge into the land.[170]

Refugees were also a byproduct of warfare during this period and were likewise often resettled. In a letter to Yasmaḫ-Addu, Ishme-Dagan reported:

> The fugitives [i.e., refugees] escaping Nurrugum about which you wrote to me . . . , keep all whom you wish from those that come to you; but those you do not keep, have them brought to me. I will find for them a suitable place.[171]

Through such processes, warfare contributed to staggering movements of military personnel but also non-combatants during the course of the MBA. At its most basic level these mobilizations involved seasonal movements of armies,

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[167] Seri 2013.
[168] ARM 10 125 (LAPO 18 1167), 10 126 (LAPO 18 1166), 27 85.
[169] Sasson 2015: 46–49.
[170] ARM 4 25 (LAPO 17 531); for translation, see ibid.: 3.6.c.i.
[171] ARM 26 269 (= ARM 4 63; LAPO 18 1034); for translation, see ibid.: 3.6.c.ii.

usually during multi-month summer campaigns, consisting of tens of thousands of soldiers and support personnel enlisted among males from the many settlements across the kingdoms of a single alliance.[172] On such campaigns these individuals participated in social interactions that explain the many smaller, incremental exchanges that contributed, along with other aspects of mobility and exchange, to the emergence of common traditions between communities otherwise removed from one another by hundreds if not thousands of kilometers.

The fairly widespread employment of mercenary units during the MBA suggests that, within the context of warfare, mercenaries also participated in these long-distance mobilizations. As Noel Weeks observes, "military organization and ability," with some employment as mercenaries, was likely the principal means by which Amorites had risen to power.[173] He suggests that such a memory even appears to be preserved in the "Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," with references to Amorite groups and Hanean soldiers (i.e., "the *palû* of the Haneans"). Furthermore, he observes that it is difficult to disregard the frequent references to the rise of rulers such as Shamshi-Adad, or to OB rulers such as Sin-kashid of Uruk, who although relying on Amorite groups to support their rise to power, were not actually members of Amorite tribes themselves. Increasing mercenarism and professional soldiering meant that we even hear of mercenaries occasionally leading rebellions, as for example in the kingdom of Yamḫad.[174]

The wider role of professional and mercenary military service is perhaps indicated by the range of terms associated with military service and the arms trade, to both of which Amorites were connected.[175] At Mari the position of *rab amurrîm* or "chief of the Amorites" (gal mar-tu) is attested,[176] recalling a similar title from the Ur III Period. Inasmuch as the term became common at Mari during the MBA – and therefore is often translated simply as "general" – these individuals seem to have commanded substantial units. In Babylon, the position of "overseer of the Amorites" (ugula mar-tu; Akk *wakil ammurîm*) is first attested during the reign of Hammurapi and, consequently, he has been suggested to have formalized this position.[177] Whether or not the roughly contemporary positions at Mari and Babylon were equivalent is unclear.[178] Either way, the existence of these positions represents formal efforts to

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[172] Charpin 2007: 285–92.
[173] Weeks 1985: 50.
[174] Lauinger 2015: 153 and references therein.
[175] Kupper 1957: 185–96.
[176] For a discussion of this position, see Sasson 1969: 12; also *CAD* A/2, 93–95; Shemshara tablet ShA1 9 in Sasson 2015: 3.3.c.ii.1; Abrahami 1997: 152n23.
[177] Voth 1981.
[178] For the suggestion that they were equivalent, see Charpin 2004: 282–84.

incorporate mercenary elements into administrative and military structures. In the late OB Period this rank was held by Amorites, Akkadians, Elamites, and Kassites,[179] exposing yet another example, of an Amorite tradition that had become widespread during this period. Amorite artisans were also involved in the production of arms. In one case a silver-plated composite bow was reportedly produced to accompany the statue of the king.[180]

Mercenaries are known not only at Mari and Babylon, but from other archives like those from Tell Leilan.[181] Among the more common terms referencing mercenaries in these texts are *ḫābiru* and *ḫabbātum*. Mercenary forces were drawn from different tribes across Mesopotamia. Aside from their participation in illicit raiding, Suteans, for example, were sometimes employed, in protecting caravans, but also in trafficking slaves, probably war captives.[182] The utility of mercenary elements in the realignment of power within urban centers at the start of the second millennium may explain many seeming inconsistencies. Yet this was simply the persistence of a role already played by prominent Amorites during the Ur III. It should be hardly surprising, therefore, that where local Babylonian successors failed to ascend the throne after the collapse of the Ur III state, with increasing frequency Amorites emerged as rulers. Many others, however, continued on in a pedestrian, if a lucrative, capacity as mercenaries, pointing to its significance as an institution during the MBA. As such, mercenaries contributed to the movement of personnel and with them a wider cultivation of a shared set of traditions.

When viewed in their totality, the persistent demographic pressures created by military activity at the behest of rulers throughout the MBA shed considerable light on the movement of personnel and the cultural exchanges that ensued from these encounters. Insofar as it may have been previously supposed that few individuals strayed far beyond the limits of their agropastoral settlements, historical sources for the MBA reveal otherwise. The social stresses of war were an unrelenting pandemic to urban communities across the Fertile Crescent, particularly during the second half of the MBA. Individuals identified as Amorites often fought against neighboring Amorites and their allies, during battles rivaling the scale of those more commonly associated with later Near Eastern empires. The most consistent result of this conflict was a steady flow of persons crisscrossing the region for centuries and carrying from one community to another a wide range of customs. Warfare thus aided in the

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[179] Seri 2013: 217–18.
[180] See UET III 566, referenced in J. Vidal 2011: 248.
[181] Sasson 2015: 194–97; see also Eidem 2011b.
[182] See Charpin 2010; also Ziegler and Reculeau 2014; e.g., ARM 6 15 and ARM 1 17, respectively.

creation of a melting pot that required the constant negotiation of identity among a large segment of Near Eastern society.

Cult Patronage

Many state-sponsored cults were also sponsored by Amorite royal households during the MBA through the patronage of the construction or restoration of sanctuaries, creating yet another context for the propagation of shared monumental traditions. Trends in the royal patronage of cults during this period point, for example, toward the frequent employment of a new, potentially ideal form in temple architecture by Amorite rulers. Very often these ideal types are entangled with other, persistent traditions such that the new traditions can only be identified by recognition of their divergence from earlier forms. If this pattern has been difficult to recognize until now, this is – as might be expected – largely because older traditions in temple architecture persisted alongside the introduction of this increasingly popular temple type. This temple type was not restricted to a particular cult tradition or set of deities, to the extent that texts, inscriptions, or iconography allow the identification of a temple with a particular deity. Furthermore, it did not occur in a single, rigid form but was mediated by local tastes and traditions.

The primary innovation in state cult by the MBA was the widespread adoption of the third-millennium *in antis* temple type for the dwellings of the leading deity or deities of a kingdom (see Chapters 2 and 3). Despite the emphasis placed on the presence of antae that led scholars to its identification as *in antis*, its chief innovation during the third millennium was actually its employment of a direct-axis plan. Thus, the change during the early second millennium was primarily its gradual adoption for temple construction and renovation, rather than a wholesale replacement of older types. Once again, the association of this temple type with Amorites is largely one based on its prevalence among Amorite capitals, where such structures were often built and sponsored by Amorite rulers. Temples, like palaces, fortifications, and water systems, were symbolic of a king's authority and legitimacy. Conformity to a prevailing style of conspicuous monumental architecture for temples is therefore unsurprising. A foundation brick inscription from the Temple of Shamash at Mari, which was constructed by Yaḫdun-Lim serves, once again, to clarify such royal patronage:

> For his own life he built the temple of the god Šamaš, his lord, a temple whose construction was perfect with finished workmanship, befitting his divinity. He installed him in his majestic dwelling. He named that temple Egirzalanki ("House – rejoicing of heaven and earth"). May the god Šamaš, who lives in that temple, grant to Iaḫdun-Lim, the builder of his temple, the king beloved of his heart, a mighty weapon which

overwhelms the enemies (and) a long reign of happiness and years of joyous abundance, forever.[183]

Although we lack the plan of a building that might have sat atop the platform he renovated there, it was very likely of the direct-axis type as will be discussed.

Many other Amorite kings also celebrated the construction or restoration of temples in royal inscriptions. Sin-kashid of Uruk, for example, extols his restoration of the Eanna temple in Uruk on bricks found there:

> Sin-kashid
> son of the goddess Ninsun,
> king of Uruk,
> builder of Eanna[184]

Numerous other examples of such endeavors can be produced for the OB Period.[185] Although such inscriptions are lacking in the Levant, the Mesopotamian inscriptions provide a sound basis for understanding the context for the contemporaneous construction of temples in the Levant, which feature the same distinct temple architecture if, rather surprisingly, on a grander scale. The prominence of this tradition bears analogy with the tradition of church construction during the Renaissance, which experienced elite patronage, often by rulers of Italian city-states.[186] The result was the construction of the largest, tallest, and certainly the most conspicuous monumental buildings of the Renaissance. For the most part during the Renaissance, these structures shared a common layout and pursuit of architectural grandeur, despite varying, in their local traditions in style and décor.

In a similar fashion, during the MBA a particular temple plan, known as the direct-axis temple, dominated temple architecture. Towering over the landscape, these structures, like the palaces with which they often shared real estate, were usually situated on the acropolis, the most elevated position within the city. The impressive appearance of these temples is evoked by clay models.[187] Because of their height, these structures could be seen from a great distance as the city was approached, and they became a signature component of the skylines of large and small settlements. In this sense, they functioned visually like the ziqqurats of Mesopotamia during the third millennium, even as a few ziqqurats continued to be built.[188] This new temple type reinforced the preeminent place of the deities, for whom they served as dwellings, and the

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[183] *RIME* 4.6.8.2.
[184] *RIME* 4.4.4.1.
[185] See *RIME* 4.
[186] Kent 2004.
[187] For example, Bär 2003: 239–59.
[188] For a list of OB ziqqurats, see Roaf 1995: 430–31.

power of the ruling elites, who patronized their construction. Although this architecture served to prominently identify a city's elites with a particular tradition of cultic expression, it was not the only type of religious architecture. It is, however, for this very reason that it serves as unique evidence of a deliberate effort to embrace this tradition in cultic architecture. Other categories of cultic architecture, which might otherwise be identified as chapels and shrines,[189] existed alongside these temples, reflecting a persistence of both personal and regional traditions in ritual. It is noteworthy that fewer similarities are to be found among these private, non-state cultic installations, despite the wider adoption of the direct-axis temple tradition.

While they are often associated with Levantine cultic architecture of the MBA,[190] variants of this direct-axis temple type were prominent in Mesopotamia and even appeared in the Egyptian Delta and Anatolia during this period. This recognition has been largely obscured by geographically myopic perceptions of temple architecture, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by diachronically constricted classifications of temple types, whether, for example, as either exclusively Middle or Early Bronze Age in date. Classifications of temples as, for example, belonging to either the "broad-room" or "long-room" type usually have regional and temporal implications, and they are often included in one type or another in the absence of sufficient exploration of parallels in neighboring regions. This is exacerbated further when such terms are also applied not only to temples themselves, but also to specific rooms within the temples.[191]

The wide geographic distribution of this temple type during the MBA has made it the subject of a number of studies.[192] More recent discovery of earlier, northern Mesopotamian antecedents of this temple type in Syria, as discussed in Chapter 2, permit a reassessment of its origins.[193] An examination of the

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[189] Notable among smaller cultic installations are the shrine at Nahariya (Yogev 1993), and also the Sanctuary of the Silver Calf at Ashkelon (Stager 2006). At Ur, Woolley identified a number of domestic and public chapels within the OB city (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 29–32, pls. 43–48).

[190] Terms include the *migdôl*-temple (i.e., "tower" temple) in the Levant (see Mazar 1986: 27–30) and the "long-room temple *in antis*" (see Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 301, passim).

[191] Temples, as well as rooms within temples, are often described, for example, as belonging to the "broad-room" (Gr. *breitraum*) or "long-room" (Gr. *langraum*) tradition. This terminology is sometimes also assumed to be part of temporal classification with, for example, broad-room temples preceding long-room temples in the Levant. While such classifications may work within circumscribed geographic regions, the manner of their former use preclude their continued use to clarify the relationships between temple layouts.

[192] See Ottosson 1980; Wright 1985; Margueron 1985; Mazar 1992.

[193] For recent discussions of this temple type and the relationship between MBA direct-axis temples and *in antis* temples of the third millennium, see Matthiae 2006b; Matthiae 2007; Matthiae 2009; and more recently D'Andrea 2014a.

exemplars of the direct-axis temple type as well as its modified and usually larger variants reveals a unified tradition of state temple architecture that is connected with the more prominently venerated deities among MBA states. This is not to say, however, that the widespread adoption of this temple type is associated with the worship of a particular set of gods or an individual deity. Yet this form of sacred architecture appears to have gained frequency through patronage by Amorite rulers, particularly in the construction of state sanctuaries, which appears to have reached its height during the eighteenth century BC.

The basic plan of this temple type consisted of a rectangular structure with a direct-axis approach that led directly to an image of the deity located at the rear of the temple. Over time the tradition of construction appears to have generally led to a lengthening of the structure's main axis as well as the addition of another dividing wall. This observation make senses of conflicting terminologies used to classify many MBA temples as well as their third-millennium precursors and LBA successors.[194] The strict adoption of the direct-axis approach stands in stark contrast to the irregularity of earlier temple types, particularly in Mesopotamia. That the direct-axis approach was its most important feature is evident from the fact that it is the single consistent attribute of the layout of these structures. While this may seem an oversimplification in the identification of this type, the introduction of this temple type to areas where it was not previously extant, such as most of southern Mesopotamia, reveals a sea change in perceptions of the accessibility of deities, one which may be paralleled in representations of OB, mostly Amorite, rulers who stand directly in front of god in presentation scenes in seal iconography.

The essential space within this temple is commonly identified as the cella or popularly as the "holy of holies" (*papāḫum*?).[195] This was occupied by an image of the god, typically a statue, located on a raised platform or dais or within a niche at the very back of the temple and thus potentially visible from the doorway. That a cella with the deity's image was also an essential element of earlier third-millennium temples appears to be reflected in the term's Old Akkadian origin. Where the physical remains of such statues are lacking they may be explained by looting or hiding during episodes of conflict or the god's ambulation between other cult centers, as suggested at Mari. It is difficult to overstate the significance of elevating the deity's position from a hidden room within a structure to such a visible location in this temple type. By virtue of the movement of the deity to a potentially visible position from outside the

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[194] See also critique in Adams, Finkelstein and Ussishkin 2014: 298.
[195] See *papāḫu* in *CAD* P, pp. 101–105; Khalesi 1978.

temple, the space in front of the temple assumed a new importance, as the staging area in the approach to the deity. This was the temple's courtyard, and the space between the temple's *antae* – projecting walls or towers – formed a type of portico (*kisallum*),[196] whether or not it was actually covered. Gradual elaboration of the temple's most basic layout appears to have led to the addition of an antecella or antechamber (*kummum*?) before the "holy of holies."[197] The lack of this feature among third-millennium precursors suggest that it was an innovation of the early part of the MBA. Further elaborations, particularly among the largest structures of this type, included the addition of extensive storage rooms accessed from the central room of the temple. Despite the evolution of a basic temple plan, the individual's approach to the temple was remarkably consistent, irrespective of the size of the temple. A direct-axis approach was virtually absent within temple design in southern Mesopotamia before the OB Period, and it should be recognized as a fundamental reconceptualization of sacred space.

The elaboration of the direct-axis temple plan to accommodate larger and more complex designs and the accompanying ornamentation would indicate the relative size of the temple's personnel and likewise of the city's place within the political hierarchy.[198] The vast majority of these large buildings reveal thick, load-bearing walls that suggest the existence of upper stories and a high ceiling within the temple itself. These structures were monumental in their construction and appearance as well as conspicuous from a great distance. Walls were usually mud-plastered inside and out and include evidence of the use of paint on walls. Plastered floors were often colored as well. Finely worked stone orthostats could be added to the base of the temple's walls and attached to the mudbrick and timber construction of the temple's superstructure. In other instances, mudbrick was used to create elaborate niching and engaged columns on its exterior. The width of these structures would have required considerable amounts of timber to support their roofs, which was often imported from distant regions. Thus, these temples were also symbols of conspicuous consumption. Mesopotamian exemplars reveal a particular interest in using terracotta or stone lions to flank the staircase at the entrance of the temple complex. Occasionally, commemorative stele were erected within the temple's courtyard or beside its entryway. Despite elaborations, variations, and ornamentation, the direct-axis tradition during the MBA suggests an idealized type of temple architecture with the potential to be

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[196] The earliest attestation of this term is during the OB Period. See *kisallu* A in *CAD* K, pp. 416–19.

[197] The term is first attested during the early second millennium, occurring in OA and OB; see *kummu* A in *CAD* K, pp. 533–34.

[198] This observation may partly explain the persistence of this style of temple through the Late Bronze and Iron ages from Mesopotamia to the southern Levant (see Mazar 1992).

adapted to regional tastes and traditions. Yet it also conveyed participation within a shared tradition of cultic architecture, an observation all the more significant in light of the range of alternative architectural plans that are also attested during this period.

Old Babylonian examples of this temple type are attested in southern Mesopotamia at Nerebtum (Ishchali), Eshnunna, Shaduppum (Tell Harmal), and Ur, and in the north at Harradum, Shubat Enlil (Tell Leilan), Qattara (Tell al-Rimah), Assur, Munbaqa, Qara Quzaq, and Tuttul (Figure 5.9). The examples from Mesopotamia stand in contrast to those from the Levant due to their scale and that the expanded size of their complexes not only permitted, but likely necessitated, greater support and storage facilities for a larger cadre of cultic personnel. Nonetheless, a number of small examples are known alongside those from larger sanctuaries. Several of the larger exemplars in Mesopotamia feature side rooms with one or two doorways leading off either side of the temple's central room, as at Shubat Enlil. The entrances to these temples were often adorned with the figures of lions, which in many cases were produced in terracotta, as at Shaduppum.[199] Additionally, in Mesopotamia these temples were very often situated within larger complexes, particularly evident among the temples at Nerebtum. The discussion of but a few Mesopotamian examples illustrates their significance during the OB Period.
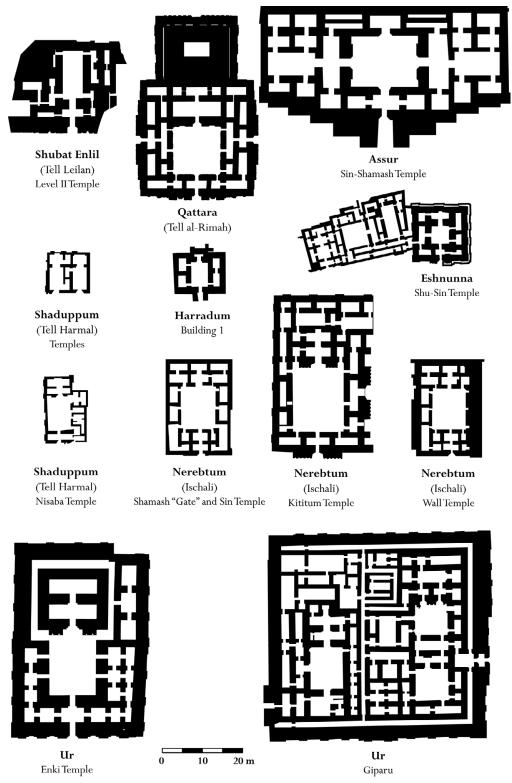
The most extensive evidence for the incorporation of the direct-axis tradition during the OB Period is to be found at Nerebtum (Tell Ishchali) in the Diyala, which was under Eshnunna's control for much of this period. There the enormous temple complex of Ishtar-Kititum reveals no fewer than two and possibly as many as three temples of this type within the greater complex, which underwent a series of destructions during the OB Period (Figure 5.9).[200] While the complex and additional buildings surrounding each of the temples was enormous, this temple type was clearly the focal point within each complex. Each is provided with a substantial forecourt that is surrounded by additional passageways and storerooms. Nonetheless, the sanctuaries consist of tripartite, direct-axis buildings. That this sanctuary for Ishtar was founded in the OB Period is demonstrated by its foundations, which lay directly atop an earlier residential area.[201] An additional example of the direct-axis temple type is also to be found at the core of the Gate Temple east of the Ishtar complex, which was probably dedicated to the moon god Sin (Figure 5.9).[202] Here another tripartite direct-axis temple lies at the back of an oversized complex

[199] Bāqir 1959: fig. 5. More lions are attested at Isin, Basmusian, Tello, Khafajah, Mashkan-Shapir, and at Bijan and Usiyeh, and even Susa in Iran. For references, see Kepinski 2012: 148n14.

[200] Hill and Jacobsen 1990.

[201] Ibid.: 27.

[202] Jacobsen 1990.

Shubat Enlil
(Tell Leilan)
Level II Temple

Qattara
(Tell al-Rimah)

Assur
Sin-Shamash Temple

Eshnunna
Shu-Sin Temple

Shaduppum
(Tell Harmal)
Temples

Harradum
Building 1

Shaduppum
(Tell Harmal)
Nisaba Temple

Nerebtum
(Ischali)
Shamash "Gate" and Sin Temple

Nerebtum
(Ischali)
Kititum Temple

Nerebtum
(Ischali)
Wall Temple

0   10   20 m

Ur
Enki Temple

Ur
Giparu

5.9 Late Old Babylonian direct–axis temples and building complexes in Mesopotamia.
Illustration by Amy Karoll

centered on a courtyard. Inasmuch as comparison of the Ishtar temple to earlier complexes such as the Khafajah Oval were attempted by the site's excavators,[203] the adoption of the direct-axis plan for the temples within these complexes was innovative for the period at the site.

Two examples at Eshnunna, the seat of Ibalpiel, reveal that these temples could stand alone or be included within larger complexes, even attached to palaces (Figure 5.9). The Shu-Sin temple, dedicated to the Ur III king by the same name but which functioned during the OB Period, is emblematic of the former approach, while the latter is exemplified by the smaller temple structure attached to the west side of the palace. The inclusion of this temple type within the Giparu at Ur, also functioning during the OB Period,[204] reveals a similar incorporation of this temple layout and appears to point to an even earlier introduction. Elsewhere at Ur, the Enki temple of Rim-Sin, if reconstructed correctly, reveals the same principles of the inclusion of this temple type within a broader complex, as is demonstrated at Nerebtum.[205] This stands in contrast to the architecture of the contemporaneous temple of Ningizzida at Ur, which itself may have been built over a direct-axis temple of the Ur III.[206] Thus, Ur likewise provides excellent evidence of varying temple traditions functioning at the same time, if not perhaps resistance to this temple type.

Two additional examples of this temple type have been exposed at Harradum (Figure 5.9), a fortress just downstream on the Euphrates from Mari that changed hands multiple times (see Chapter 4).[207] At Harradum, the main temple is of the larger direct-axis layout with additions that include storage rooms and an assembly room(?) leading from both sides of the central room or courtyard. The second smaller and incomplete temple is also of the direct-axis type. From it were recovered ceramic fragments belonging to a statue of a lion, which compares with the evidence from Shaduppum. Although neither of the deities worshiped in these temples can be identified with certainty, at least one of them may have been dedicated to Adad since texts from the site reference a temple to him in Harradum.[208]

Two monumental examples of this temple type are also attested within Shamshi-Adad's territory in northern Mesopotamia and were likely built by him. The Level II temple at Leilan (Figure 5.9) appears to be one of the largest examples of this type.[209] The limited extent of the complex's excavation

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[203] See Hill and Jacobsen 1990: 60, fig. 18.
[204] Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 62–69, pl. 118.
[205] Ibid.: 64–67, pl. 120.
[206] Ibid.: 67–69, fig. 17.
[207] Kepinski-Lecomte 1992: 147–50.
[208] Kepinski 2012: 148.
[209] Weiss, Akkermans, Stein, et al. 1990: 536–40, fig. 3.

precludes, however, a definitive sense of the situation of this direct-axis temple within the complex as a whole. Nonetheless, the structure's cella featured additional spaces, presumably storerooms, with limited access flanking it, and engaged columns were identified on the temple's northern and southern facades. To the east, the temple at Qattara (Tell al-Rimah; Figure 5.9) is a particularly excellent illustration of syncretism in monumental state cultic architecture, which adapted this temple type to earlier cultic building types. Enclosed within a broad complex centered around a large courtyard is the basic form of a the direct-axis temple type accompanied by storage and other rooms. The excavators attributed the structure to the reign of Shamshi-Adad I.[210] Behind the temple was a ziqqurat, the quintessence of state cult during the third millennium in southern Mesopotamia. The co-occurrence of these forms of state cultic architecture suggest the degree to which this temple type was emblematic of monumental temple architecture during the MBA and the local efforts made to accommodate the newer tradition to persistent cultic emblems and traditions. The deity to whom this temple was dedicated remains unclear, but suggestions include Ishtar, Adad, or the goddess Geshtin-anna.[211]

From the late nineteenth century BC, variations on the direct-axis temple program reveal this temple type's wide adoption as a common layout for state temple complexes. In addition to Leilan, another complex at Assur dated to the reign of Shamshi-Adad I may be a composite of two direct-axis temples.[212] Toward the end of the OB Period, variations on temple architecture further illustrate how this temple type was adapted in innovative ways. At Assur, for example, two temples of this type, which were dedicated to Sin and Shamash, faced each other and shared a common courtyard within an enclosed complex with only one entrance to the courtyard (Figure 5.9).[213]

The direct-axis temple is prevalent at Mari as well during the OB Period (City III), which appears to have continued temple traditions introduced during the Shakkanakku Period of the late third and early second millennium (see Figure 2.4). This layout is, for example, central to the smaller "chapel of Ishtar" as well as the temple of Ishtar at the center of Zimri-Lim's palace (Figure 5.2).[214] While the latter has been identified as the throne room owing to its centrality within the palace, the recovered remains of statues of former kings at the foot of the steps leading to the back room of this structure may suggest that this was, instead, the *papāḫum* of Ishtar's palace chapel.[215] The statues of kings were likely placed here as perpetual observers before the

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[210] Oates 1967: 71.
[211] Ibid.: 96; Dalley 1997: 429.
[212] Miglus 2001.
[213] Werner 2009.
[214] See rooms 132 and 65, respectively, in Margueron 2004: 485, fig. 37.
[215] See ibid.: 411–12; also Khalesi 1978.

goddess, as was the custom in southern Mesopotamia during the third millen-nium.[216] Thus the location of the "holy of holies" was here, reversing the traditional identifications of the throneroom and temple. This also clarifies why the central structure's walls were so thick and why its design conforms so well to the direct-axis plan overall and, still further, why its approach featured a rabetted entryway to the "holy of holies," as attested among other temples. If correct, then, the king was seated facing the god from the opposite wall on which a pediment was located.[217]

The direct-axis type was also the prevailing temple type in the Levant during the second half of the MBA, with numerous examples. Specimens have been identified at Ebla, Alalakh, Hazor, Pella, Tell el-Hayyat, Tel Kitan, Megiddo, Shechem, and Tel Haror (Figure 5.10).[218] Early studies of these frequently treated them as late MBA innovations and for this reason suggested to identify them as Hurrian or Indo-European in origin.[219] However, the earliest examples of MBA direct-axis temples, as noted in Chapter 2, are attested at Ebla in the northern Levant, where they reveal the continuation of the so-called temple *in antis* tradition of the mid-third millennium. While the direct-axis temples are often much larger in the Levant than among their Mesopotamian counterparts (cf. Figures 5.9 and 5.10), the precincts of the Mesopotamian temples were much larger, which points to the employment of a larger number of cultic officiants.

In relationship to the acropolis located in the center of Ebla (Figure 5.11), temples there include the Ishtar Temple (Area D) to the west and Ishtar's sacred area below it to the northwest with additional temples to Ishtar (P2), Shamash (Area N) to the northeast, Resheph (Area C) to the southwest, Kura (Area HH) to the southeast, and Temple B (Figure 5.10). Temples D and HH2 ("Temple of the Rock") are the only two examples with tripartite divisions.[220] Proposals for the deities worshipped in Ebla's third-millennium temples are limited owing to scarce finds from within them. On the basis of references in the Ebla texts, Matthiae suggests, however, that the Rock and Red temples were dedicated to the gods Hadad and Kura, respectively.[221] A stele dedicated to Ishtar with elaborate scenes carved on it is associated with Shrine G3, which

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[216] Postgate 1992: 132.
[217] Although this interpretation places the king in a less elevated position while placing the goddess at the center of the complex, the data fit this interpretation and are in line with the other direct-axis temples of the period. At Tuttul, another such temple has been identified (Miglus and Strommenger 2002: 102–13, Taf. 24, Beilage 23).
[218] For recent summaries, see Morandi Bonacossi 2014a: 426; D'Andrea 2014a; Katz 2009; Mazar 1992. See also Tilmen Höyük in Marchetti 2006: 277.
[219] For a review of the problem, see Mazar 1992: 167–69.
[220] Matthiae 2013c: 267–76, 81–84.
[221] Matthiae 2007: 488; 2013d: 188–89; 2013g: 214–15.
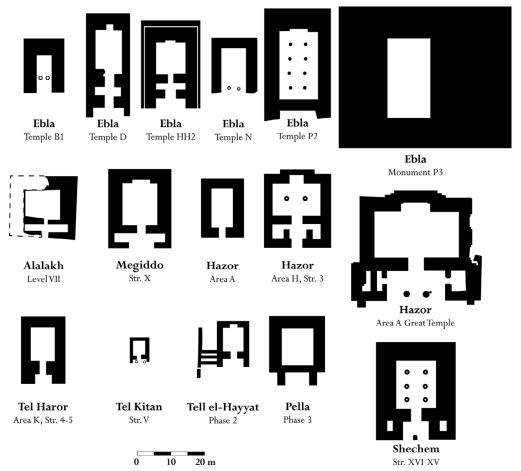
5.10 Late Middle Bronze Age direct-axis temples in the Levant.
Illustration by Amy Karoll
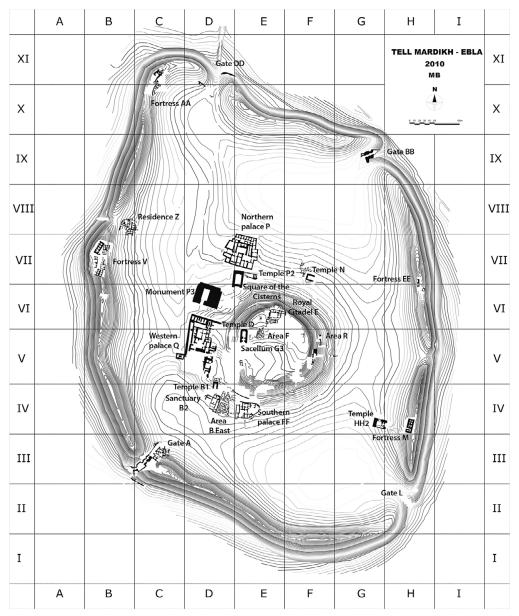
although not traditionally identified with the other direct-axis temples at Ebla, also belonged to this plan.[222]

A number of other examples of this temple type are also known in the Levant. Within the kingdom of Yamḫad, Level VII at Alalakh, which is dated to the late eighteenth to early seventeenth century BC, features a major example of this temple type (Figure 5.10).[223] The temple was dedicated to Ishtar and was managed by the palace, as demonstrated through a reanalysis of the OB texts recovered at the site.[224] The temple architecture seen in Level VII, which actually begins with Level XI, reveals a striking shift in temple

[222] Matthiae 2013b.
[223] Woolley 1955: 59–65.
[224] Lauinger 2011b.

5.11 Layout of Ebla indicating the locations of major temples.
Source: Matthiae and Marchetti 2014: fig. 1.2. Reproduced courtesy of the Ebla expedition

design with the adoption of the direct-axis temple plan. Earlier temples (levels XV–XII), atop which it was constructed, bear no resemblance except in general size to the Level VII temple plan,[225] while the plans of the temples of levels XI to VIII are identified as earlier MBA subphases of the Level VII
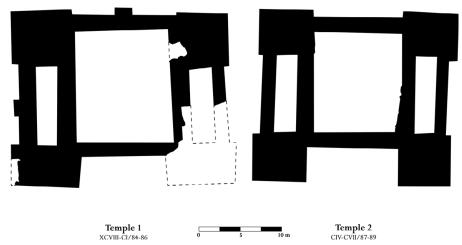
[225] See Woolley 1955: 33–59.

temple from the end of the MBA.[226] Woolley, who also excavated the Uruk temple previously discussed, suggested that the direct-axis temple plan was adopted during Level XI, recognizing associations with Mesopotamian exemplars.[227] Thus, the sudden change in temple architecture signals a distinct shift in cultic architectural traditions during the MBA also at Alalakh.

Canaan also provides a number of examples to illustrate the dominance of this temple type in state cultic architecture from ca. 1800 BC. These have been sometimes identified as the Syrian Temple type because of their comparisons with examples from the northern Levant, particularly from Ebla and Alalakh.[228] At Hazor, which possesses the most northern examples from Canaan, they reveal once again the adoption of the direct-axis plan with some elaboration, as in Area H in Stratum 3 of the lower city and Area A on the upper mound (Figure 5.10).[229] However, the largest temple of this type found at Hazor – and the southern Levant – is the Great Temple in Area A on the upper mound, although it has been dated to the LBA and is sometimes identified as a "Ceremonial Palace."[230] However, the absence of any MBA structures below this particular building and the presence of MBA metal statuary and MK statue fragments are among a number of factors that suggest that it should be identified as a late MBA structure.[231] The building was part of a larger complex centered on a courtyard, which featured an altar with animal bones. Despite their lack of sprawling complexes, the similarities between Hazor's temples and those of the northern Levant and Mesopotamia are very clear.[232]

At Pella during the MB II–III, a massive direct-axis temple stood as part of a sequence of temples spanning the entirety of the MBA. In Phases 3 and 4 dated to the late MBA, the temple grew from 22 × 16 m to as much as 32 m long and 24 m wide with towers or *antae* protruding from its front (Figure 5.10).[233] Meanwhile at nearby Tell el-Hayyat, the temple of this type continued its development from the MB I (see Figure 4.14), during Pases 3 and 2. Remains of the Phase 2 temple, of 11 x 10 m in size, even preserve evidence of wall plastering inside and out, including the use of red paint.[234] At Tel Kitan in Stratum V, the MB II direct-axis temple possessed standing stones, among them a stone-carved goddess 0.5 m tall (Figure 5.10).[235]

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[226] Stein 1997: 57.
[227] Woolley referred to this as the "*Breittempel* with its broad and shallow sanctuary [i.e., *cella*] characteristic of Babylonia" (1955: 54).
[228] Mazar 1992: 164.
[229] Yadin, Aharoni, Amiran, et al. 1989: 215–23 Bonfil 1997: 25–50.
[230] Ben-Tor, Zuckerman, Bechar, et al. 2017a.
[231] Ornan 2017; Connor, Laboury, Marée, et al. 2017.
[232] For example, Mazar 1992: 166.
[233] Bourke 2012: 94–95, 163–69.
[234] Falconer and Magness-Gardiner 1993: 592; Falconer and Fall 2006.
[235] Eisenberg 1993: 880; Eisenberg 1977.

Temple 1
XCVIII-CI/84-86

0   5   10 m

Temple 2
CIV-CVII/87-89

5.12 Plan of Temples 1 and 2 from the reign of Anitta (ca. 1740–1725 BC) at Kanesh Kültepe (Level Ib).
Illustration by Amy Karoll

The structure's portico was elaborated with columns to support its overhanging roof, while benches lined its interior. The temple was expanded during the following phase (Stratum IV) and featured walls about 2.5 m thick, entirely enfolding the earlier building within the interior space of the new temple, while maintaining the original orientation. As the older standing stones were phased out, bases were erected for a new set.

A temple of the same type is also known at Megiddo (Temple 2048, Figure 5.10) and is presumed to have MBA foundations.[236] The temple type is also attested in the hill country to the south of the Jezreel Valley during the MBA, as at Shechem (Figure 5.10).[237] That the temple type was not restricted to northern Canaan during the second half of the MBA is evident at Tel Haror (Figure 5.10). The direct-axis temple was excavated in Area K and belonged to a cultic complex. The courtyard outside the temple featured a mudbrick altar for offerings. Miniature votive vessels, cult stands, and a large quantity of animal bones (mostly sheep) were recovered from the complex.[238]
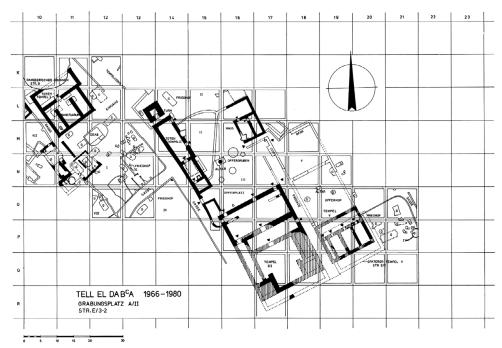
The prevalence and appeal of the direct-axis temple type is also demonstrated by its appearance in areas beyond Mesopotamia and the Levant during the second half of the MBA. Although they have not previously been identified as sacred structures of this type, two temples at Kültepe Kanesh also reveal the adoption of the traditional direct-axis temple type in parts of Anatolia (Figure 5.12).[239] These temples belong to Kültepe Ib and are attributed by its

[236] Loud 1948: 102–04; see also Dunayevsky and Kempinski 1973: 179–86.
[237] Campbell 2002: 145–54; Wright 2002: ills. 61, 62, 64, and 65.
[238] Oren 1997b: 263–66, figs. 8.8–8.10; also Katz 2009.
[239] Özgüç 1999: 117–20.

5.13 Plan of direct-axis temple (Temple III) at Avaris in Area A/II.
Source: Bietak, 1991:fig. 3. Reproduced courtesy of Manfred Bietak

excavator to Anitta, ruler of Kültepe during the eighteenth century (1740–1725 BC), who claimed to have built two temples.[240] The significance of the adoption of this type of temple is underscored by its total departure from the plan of the structures below them. Whether or not these are the temples Anitta mentions, they are excellent examples of the high point in the appearance of the direct-axis temple type and its wide adoption. They adhere very clearly, however, to the traditional direct-axis temple type known throughout Mesopotamia and the Levant in this period. The royal sponsorship of the construction of this temple type should hardly be surprising, however, in light of the intensive contacts Kanesh experienced with Mesopotamia and the Levant, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Excavations at Avaris (Tell ed-Dabʿa) in the eastern Nile Delta have also revealed what appears to be another example of this temple (Figure 5.13).[241] There in the eastern suburb in Area A/II, Temple III was constructed probably in Stratum F (ca. 1800 BC) by a Fourteenth Dynasty pharaoh named ʿAa-zeh-Reʿ Nehesy, whose name was inscribed on door jambs found in secondary

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[240] Ibid.: 120 Although the stratigraphic data from within the buildings are poor, the plans deviate from earlier local traditions and for this reason have been mistakenly identified as uniquely Anatolian. For translation of the text, see Hoffner 1997.

[241] Bietak 1996: 36–40.

contexts that likely originally belonged to this building. This would suggest that Temple III may have been built to serve the Asiatics living at the site, despite the fact that this ruler was not evidently Semitic, at least as suggested by his Egyptian throne name. The temple's plan and the adjoining complex, which includes Temple II on its western side (not of the direct-axis type), is built to characteristics in line with the direct-axis temple complexes discussed previously, but is distinct in layout from Egyptian style temples such as Temple V, located to the east of Temple III.[242] The building was evidently painted blue and in the adjoining courtyard to the north was an altar from which acorns were recovered. This along with tree pits has led to the suggestion that the temple was associated with Asherah.[243] Additional pits in the courtyard included the remains of donkeys and may point to their sacrifice.

In sum, state temple architecture of the second half of the MBA reveals the widespread adoption of the direct-axis temple, featuring a cella in which a representation of the god was located. Few such representations of the deity are often preserved, as for example from Qatna and Hazor,[244] and rarely from temple contexts, but these are remarkably similar in their overall representation of the god. While a variety of deities were worshiped in these complexes, the appearance of this temple type across such a wide region is suggestive of considerable cultural interaction across these regions and likely, as in many other aspects of material culture during this period, is reflective of competitive emulation among the period's mostly Amorite rulers and also occasionally in neighboring regions such as Anatolia and the Egyptian Delta.

While we cannot discern to what extent the training of priests and other temple personnel within these shrines was entirely comparable, there are indications that they did share some practices. Just as the adoption of a common temple type may reveal something of a shared set of perceptions regarding the divine, common practices of divination further point to commonalities among cultic approaches. Shared notions of a divine will are clearly expressed in works such as the Sumerian King List and in increasing reliance on diviners or prophets.[245] Diviners (*bārûm*), for instance, were trained to read the livers of animals (hepatoscopy) by means of clay liver models, examples of which are known from Babylonia to Mari and Hazor in Canaan.[246] These reveal that the training of diviners in this craft took place within the largest communities of the region, which were also the loci for most scribal training.

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[242] See also Bietak 2009.
[243] Wyatt 1999: 100–101.
[244] For examples of MBA statuary from Ugarit and Qatna, see Aruz, Benzel, and Evans 2008: 46–48. See also figs. 40 and 41 in Dalley 1984: 117–18. For image of MBA deity at Hazor found in a LBA context, see Ornan 2012: 1, fig. 12.
[245] Ristvet 2014: 117–18.
[246] See Hazor 2–3 in Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006: 66–68.

As with warfare, the circulation of cultic personnel across the region's king-doms, as suggested in the Mari archives, were likely behind the spread of these customs.

Sacrificial practices also became more conspicuous and likely resulted in increasing attempts to identify cultic equivalencies between geographically disparate communities. Monumental spaces and structures, which appear to have been regular elements of urban and non-urban communities alike, served as the loci of highly conspicuous sacrificial practices. Among such features are altars at Hazor and Avaris and monumental platforms at sites such as Ebla and Umm el-Marra[247] as well as stone mounds (Akk. pl. *humūsū*), sometimes comprising burials, usually located in the countryside.[248]

The incorporation of standing stones or betyls (OB pl. *sikkanātum*) in cult precincts has been identified among the Mari letters, for example, where they are associated with the reign of Zimri-Lim.[249] Significant efforts were evidently made in their procurement, preparation, and transport, and they were often identified with a particular deity. Judging from their frequency, they appear to have been widely adopted in cult practices during the MBA, though variations certainly existed in how they functioned across the Near East. Possible examples are attested in cult contexts at Ebla.[250] While some could be carved with decoration,[251] in the Levant most were undecorated, in keeping with the long-standing tradition of undecorated stone monoliths from the third millennium. As mentioned earlier, while such monuments have been identified in temple contexts in the Levant as well, their precise function remains unclear. The limited evidence for them in southern Mesopotamia was likely the product of the fact that stone could only be procured from great distances. Consequently, the erection of stelae was considered an event to be celebrated.[252]

KINSHIP AND SOCIAL STATUS

In Mesopotamia, corpora of OB texts reveal the importance placed on kinship and social status, which were curated through various traditions from laws and edicts to mortuary practices. Where texts are few, as in the Levant, archaeo-logical data expose the perpetuation of analogous customs. Discoveries in the Levant, such as fragments of legal traditions, continue to expand our under-standing of Amorite communities in the west, lending support to the

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[247] Ristvet 2014: 128–35.
[248] Durand 2005: 93–142.
[249] Ibid.: 1–91.
[250] Matthiae 2013b.
[251] Durand 2005: 33.
[252] For references to OB stelae, see *RIME* 4.1.4.10; 4.2.13.1, 4.3.6.3 (also *Laws of Hammurapi*), 4.5.19.1 (Stele of Dadusha, discussed previously), and 4.6.8.2.

identification of shared expressions of kinship, status, and social order that resulted from extensive ties between Amorite communities across the Fertile Crescent. Conspicuous artifacts of these relationships include legal traditions, mortuary customs, and other means of marking status.

Legal Traditions and Edicts

Legal traditions provide a primary means of evaluating the role that kinship, the maintenance of social order and status played within Amorite communities. They also emphasize the important role of the king in the maintenance of these,[253] and how laws clearly served on occasion as royal apologia.[254] The greatest legacy of the OB Period may be the legal traditions that were enshrined in the laws famously written on the diorite stele erected in the eighteenth century BC by Hammurapi, king of Babylon, whose Amorite affiliations are well known. Shortly after the discovery of the stele (*narû*) on which Hammurapi's laws were inscribed, its significance as a precursor to the legal traditions of the Hebrew Bible was often discussed. Among the major features of both legal traditions is the principle of *lex talionis* or the legal sanction of retaliation, the principle known more commonly by the expression "an eye for an eye." Although frequently identified as a law code or codex, this legal tradition is more appropriately identified simply as a collection of casuistic laws, referring to a set of legal sanctions related to specific conditions that are enshrined in "if" (protasis) "then" (apodosis) statements, which it shares in common with other contemporaneous law codes.

While it is clear that the list of more than three hundred laws recorded on Hammurapi's stele do not constitute a complete "code" for civil law, particularly since many subjects are not addressed, the collection reveals the fullest known version of the enshrinement of legal traditions and a social order that appears to have prevailed within many MBA communities. This contention is illustrated by comparable legal traditions preserved in *The Laws of Eshnunna* (ca. 1770 BC) and *The Edict of Ammisaduqa* (ca. 1640 BC) from Babylon as well as by the preservation of a fragmentary section of laws from Hazor in Canaan, all of which are dated to the second half of the MBA. Although it is not certain that in all places laws were publicly displayed, the stele bearing Hammurapi's laws, fragments of the *Laws of Lipit-Ishtar* from Isin, and references to consulting stele (*narû*) inscribed with laws suggest that they were effectively public for the occasional consultation by citizens or their literate legal counsel.[255]

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[253] Charpin 2004: 313–16.
[254] Finkelstein 1961: 103–104; Wells and Magdalene 2009: 4–6.
[255] For Lipit-Ishtar references, see Roth 1997: 34 and 238n1; see OA text quoted in Larsen (2015: 108, see n.15 for text) and OB letter dated to about year ten of Samsuiluna (A.3529

Through both the laws themselves as well as the manner of their presentation, monumentality factored into these publicly sponsored definitions of social order, at least from the perspective of the ruling elites.

It was not until the discovery of two fragments of a cuneiform tablet from debris originating from the excavation of Hazor Area M, on the north slope of the upper mound, in 2010 that the transmission of the OB legal tradition to the southern Levant was recognized.[256] While the exact genre of the text that references several laws at Hazor is debatable, it reveals a familiarity with a similar tradition in the west.[257] Given that many of Mesopotamia's legal traditions were preserved within copies or scribal exercises (and remembering that Hammurapi's stele was not found in Babylon but Susa, where it was taken as a war trophy), it is not difficult to accept that a stele bearing laws may also have once stood at Hazor. To the east in the Elamite capital of Susa, a stele is also said to have been erected by the ruler Addaḫushu during the nineteenth century,[258] revealing the extent of the mimicry of this practice.

The *Laws of Hammurapi*, the text fragment from Hazor, as well as the *Laws of Eshnunna* also call attention to a prevailing social order among Amorite-ruled communities, something that is otherwise veritably inaccessible through arch-aeological data. Although the structure is most rigid among the *Laws of Hammurapi*, all three law collections refer to the free man (*awîlum*; LÚ), the dependent (perhaps of the palace or temple) or commoner (*muškēnum*), and the slave (*wardum*; ÌR). Although these terms may have been flexible in different legal contexts, they – as well as the many occupations identified among the laws – are suggestive of a well-defined social hierarchy. *The Edict of Ammisaduqa*, for example, distinguishes "Akkadians and Amorites," in the most explicit separation of these identities during this period.[259] The edict belongs to a genre of OB texts known as *mišarum*, which were largely intended to address increasing socioeconomic disparities resulting from the problematic economic conditions of the period that left so many in a constant state of indebtedness. How exactly to read the juxtaposition of Akkadians and Amorites in this tradition is, however, unclear.

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from the Oriental Institute collection); for translation and references to discussions, see Roth 1997: 6 and 238n1.

[256] The fragments apparently originate from debris from the excavation of Area M, on the north slope of the upper mound. See Horowitz, Oshima, and Vukosavović 2012: 158n3.

[257] Ibid.: 139 According to Horowitz et al.: "There may have been room for as many as 20–30 additional laws, but most likely there were fewer. These laws, in turn, might have belonged to an even larger collection of laws that was recorded over multiple tablets, or our tablet may offer a small extract from a larger codex. In this, a comparison may be made to tablets and fragments containing extracts from LH, which ultimately belong to the full set of laws, with prologue and epilogue."

[258] For references and discussion, see Roth 1997: 7.

[259] Pritchard and Fleming 2011: 526–28.

The importance of this social order was not simply its articulation by means of laws or a culturally specific definition of justice, but rather that these laws played an important role in preserving the *economic* status of the individuals enumerated in the framework of different legal circumstances. Values were specified for everything from wages to lives and body parts. At the heart of MBA legal traditions was the ever-present issue of property rights, and it is no accident that the greatest number of laws concern freemen, who also owned the most property. For instance, already in the OA documents from Kanesh, reference to civil law and legal status centered on the protection of inheritance by merchants during the early MBA.[260] A text from Hazor in Canaan provides an excellent example of a case concerning such economic issues for which arbitration by the king was sought. It reads like the minutes from the meeting:

> Bin-Hanuta and Irpadu and Sum-Hanuta, three junior attendants;
> A lawsuit against Sumulailum initiated in regard to a home and a garden in the city of Hazor, and a garden in the city of Gilead?.
> Before the king, they came in. The king (in favour of) the case of Sumulailum rendered judgment. Hereafter should anyone (another) lawsuit [initiat]e, he will make a supplementary payment of 200 (shekels) of silver. (*Hazor* 5, lns. 1–9)[261]

That such legal language along with a text such as this has been recovered from the Levant reveals the extent of the dissemination of these traditions under Amorite aegis.

Inheritance within kinship structures was the principal determinant for the retention of property and was often at the core of these legal traditions.[262] Whether in laws for recompense against false accusations concerning a virgin daughter, appropriate compensation for the loss of livestock, body parts, or an enslaved person, a dominant concern, if not the principal concern, was the protection of an individual's economic status and the retention of wealth by a rightful heir or heirs. The economic underpinnings of these legal traditions are perhaps best revealed in the *Laws of Eshnunna*, which after a brief superscription, begins with a rather blunt accounting of the fixed equivalencies for various commodities.[263]

When these laws are read in the multicultural and socioeconomic context of the MBA, a new light is shed on their significance. They are less concerned with social justice than with insuring adequate compensation for lost assets and thus the maintenance of social status and a rigid social order. Ever larger multicultural communities, including mixed socioeconomic statuses during a

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[260] Hertel 2013.
[261] Horowitz, Oshima, and Sanders 2006: 71.
[262] Selz 2007.
[263] Roth 1997: 59.

period of considerable political conflict, created contexts for social conflicts and abuses of the poor, but also exploitation of the wealth of the ruling class that could contribute to the destabilization of elite power. To the extent that they were implemented, such laws mediated disputes that were not addressed by councils of elders and assemblies, which likely were the first to look into most grievances.[264] They also standardized expectations for reasonable compensation in the event of a loss. But above all, the laws served as a means toward an end, namely a formal articulation of social expectations concerning the relationship of individuals within and across classes and to their property.

Mortuary Customs

Mortuary customs, as preserved in the archaeological remains of burials and cemeteries, also reveal the marking of status and efforts to maintain family identity. This was especially the case for burials during the MBA, when a range of burial practices emphasize not only the kinship relationships between the living and the dead, but also often signal their social status, frequently replicating at different levels of the social hierarchy traditions that were conspicuous among ruling elites. Despite a degree of variability, remarkable continuities can be identified among burial traditions throughout many communities across the Fertile Crescent during the second half of the MBA. Together with textual sources these traditions reveal widely shared concepts and concerns about burial that conform to what appears to be an ideal type for the burial of members of these communities.[265] Although distinctions in burial location, tomb architecture, funerary kits, orientation, and the like often serve as the primary bases for the comparison of mortuary customs, such approaches often obscure the identification of shared ideologies across different burials traditions, especially when they may be shaped by environmental adaptation or local negotiations of identities. By means of texts and the orientations and spatial distribution of burials it is possible to identify a shared ideology that governed burial practices among MBA communities in southwest Asia.

Location may be the most significant aspect of burial traditions, revealing ideological "preferences." By the eighteenth century BC, inhumation traditions across the Fertile Crescent reveal a clear preference for household burial. To the extent that circumstances permitted, these were often located under the house or within its courtyard which, as noted earlier, can be called residential funerary chambers.[266] This preference is perhaps best exemplified among royal burials, discussed earlier, which favored inhumation in large familial crypts

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immediately below the palace, the royal residence. However, this preference is also expressed at lower levels of the social hierarchy. The arrangement of domestic space to integrate family burials was vital, therefore, to creating something akin to an *axis-mundi* for an extended household that was likely of particular significance at the start of the MBA when major social, economic, and political changes were afoot. Depending on the economic and political status of a household as well as the stage of its lifecycle, domestic burial practices ranged from simple subfloor burial pits for adults and infant burials in vessels to stone-built tombs and elaborate stone-cut crypts or shafts tombs. While the varied forms of these burials may superficially reveal little in common among these practices, they are all linked by virtue of a principal concern for maintaining proximate relationships between living descendants and their deceased ancestors, in a manner far more consistent across vast distances than at any point earlier. This is markedly different, for example, from practices where cemeteries are separated from communities, not just extramurally but by the placement of the cemetery at a considerable distance from the community to which the deceased belonged.

Burials in Mesopotamia during the OB Period reveal an interest in interments below houses. From Ur to Isin, Larsa, Sippar, Nippur, and Mari, a preference for residential funerary structures prevailed among most settlements during the MBA.[267] Their form ranged from massive vaulted and corbel-vaulted complexes to simple inhumations below the floors in ceramic vessels.[268] At Ur, burials were located below the floors of houses from the early MBA on. There more than 360 residential funerary structures comprised pits, large storage jars, clay coffins, and chamber tombs.[269] The typical burial at Mari also occurred below the house within a jar.[270] In northern Mesopotamia residential funerary structures have been identified at Chagar Bazar, Tell Barri, Tell Mozan (ancient *Urkesh*), Tell Mohammed Diyab, Tell Halawa, and Assur.[271] Even at Kanesh during the late OA Period, burials below the floors of homes were common.[272] Additional examples can be identified in the Jazira and along the Middle Euphrates.[273]

Residential burial practices are also attested during the second half of the MBA in the Levant.[274] While some variation existed among built structures in the Levant, as in Mesopotamia, the contents of both structural and corbel-

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[267] Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 322.
[268] Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 33–39, 194–213.
[269] Laneri 2011: 130.
[270] Margueron 2004: 455–56, fig. 35; Margueron 2014: 130, fig. 34.
[271] Mallowan 1937; Valentini 2004; Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2002a.
[272] Larsen 2015: 47, 49.
[273] Felli 2012: esp. 79n4, for bibliography.
[274] Mazar 1990: 214; Ilan 1995b. See also Hallote 1995; Hallote 2002; Cradic 2017; Cradic 2018.

vaulted tombs[275] suggest that while details of their construction distinguished them, they reasonably reflected a shared burial ideology. During the second half of the MBA, examples of built tombs below houses are attested at Ugarit, Tell Tweini, Megiddo, Tel Kabri, and Tel Dan.[276] A large percentage of the burials were, however, simple inhumations below the floors of houses, as amply attested through the remains of infant burials,[277] an observation that also correlates with high infant mortality in antiquity.

Despite the occasional appearance of infant burials among family crypts, these were most prevalent underneath the floors of houses during this period from Mesopotamia to the Levant and throughout parts of southern Anatolia. While infant interments – the vessel type and paraphernalia – took various forms, they reveal a widely adopted practice across the Levant, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and the eastern Nile Delta by the eighteenth century BC. In their simplest form, as subfloor inhumations, burials included pits dug into the floors of houses, permitting oversight of the remains of the deceased. The selection of burial vessels ranged from storage jars to cooking pots, both of which were ready-made coffins, particularly for infants or small children. While in the southern Levant and the Delta infants were almost always buried in storage jars, in the northern Levant the cooking pot was regularly employed.[278] Such subtle differences are suggestive of regional variations of a broader, shared tradition.

That some burials were located outside of towns, particularly in the southern Levant, where numerous extramural cemeteries can be identified on the slopes of and opposite the mound on which the town was located, suggests that variations in burial practices certainly existed, but also that demographic factors could influence these choices.[279] Non-residential burial traditions, those dissociated with domiciles, were usually located just outside the city, usually on the slopes of mounds – a notable feature of many Levantine settlements in this period. Such burials are more difficult to associate with particular groups, and they have not been traditionally distinguished from intramural examples owing to similarities in their contents. Nevertheless, factors such as space, property inheritance, and social status likely also affected the location of burial customs. Megiddo, as one example, reveals the co-occurrence of both practices, namely intramural domestic burials and cave burials during the second half of the MBA.[280] Since little distinguishes the

[275] Gonen 1992: 153–56.
[276] Yon 2006: 121; Hameeuw, Vansteenhuyse, Jans, et al. 2006; Guy 1938: 137; Arie 2008: esp. fig. 2; Scheftelowitz 2002: 32–34; Kempinski and Scheftelowitz 2002: 49–54; Ilan 1995b: 122–25; Ilan 1996.
[277] See Ilan 1996: 248; Morandi Bonacossi 2014a: 427; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 308.
[278] In the northern Levant, see infant burials at Alalakh.
[279] Mazar 1990: 213–14.
[280] Guy 1938: 137; Loud 1948: 15, 92–97.

assemblages or funerary kits associated with these burials, the possibility remains that by the second half of the MBA demographic factors contributed significantly to such patterns, with ever increasing limitations on space and the changing social composition of communities.[281] This is likely, since the continuation of domestic burial practices presumed that a family line would persist without interruption with the eldest surviving son of a household caring for their deceased ancestors.[282] Two centuries into the MBA, however, most households undoubtedly had experienced significant changes in their composition, to say nothing of the effects of mobility and mortality, and both a decline in the practice within towns as well as the increase in extramural burials is to be expected. Such a shift therefore anticipated concerns regarding the locus of burial in Canaan's smaller towns, almost guaranteeing that family burial places, now within extramural caves, could avoid disturbance. Still, to the extent that extramural burials already appear during the first and second centuries of the second millennium, it is worthwhile to consider that the persistence of certain styles of cave burials likely reveal that local populations account for this practice and that their comparable accoutrements reveal negotiations of identity with Amorite groups. By one means or another, analogous burial traditions emerged from the Levant to Mesopotamia and southern Anatolia.

A second discrete category of burials may be identified as tumuli. While these too feature antecedents in the third millennium – in many cases potentially revealing associations with earlier groups – the prevailing concern of these extramural burials was likely their association with the landscape. Tumuli style burials, which are reminiscent of third-millennium practices, persisted along the flanks of the Middle Euphrates Valley, for example, in the vicinity of Jebel Bishri and may be associated with certain Amorite groups.[283] At Dilmun in the Persian Gulf, burial mounds were a tradition since the late third millennium and were already beginning to decline during the second half of the MBA.[284] Still, the legacy of this landscape persisted and built tombs, buried below earthen mounds, were common. Although the unique geographic position of the island might suggest various other influences, the presence of Amorites and an Amorite dynasty at Dilmun provides a basis for interpreting these simple tomb complexes within the continuum of built tombs and tumuli of an Amorite-style adapted to local conditions. The tumuli range in grandeur from simple structures of little more than two meters in diameter to stone-built vaults of as much as eight meters in diameter.[285] Burials seem rarely to have

[281] Schloen 2001: 329–31.
[282] For example, *The 'Aqhatu Legend* (Pardee 1997: 344).
[283] Fujii and Adachi 2010; Nakamura 2010.
[284] Højlund and Johansen 2007; Laursen 2017.
[285] Højlund and Johansen 2007: 131, fig. 267.

been communal and in this respect parallel more closely the so-called warrior burial tradition of the late third millennium and the early MBA. However, offerings of sheep – not an animal typically associated with Dilmun's environment – within the tombs are suggestive of practices akin to those well attested in MBA tombs in the Levant.[286]

For MBA burial customs in the southern Levant, Jill Baker has suggested the existence of a "funeral kit" among MBA burials that persisted with gradual modifications into the LBA but with striking consistency.[287] Based on an analysis of the cemetery at Ashkelon and comparison with cemeteries at Tell el-'Ajjul, Lachish, Tel Aviv Harbor, Aphek, Jericho, Tel Kabri, Dan, and others, she identifies elements indicative of this kit, which include a standard assemblage of ceramics and food remains as well as items associated with personal dress, including toggle pins and scarabs.[288] It is, of course, not difficult to see in this a relatively consistent approach reflective of a shared approach to burial, even if permutations resulted from blending local traditions and the existence of varied practices among different Amorite and other communities.

Where extramural cemeteries were not adopted in Mesopotamia, a high rate of tomb robbing occurred, as at Ur, such that a great many of the built tombs below houses were plundered after the OB Period.[289] The funeral kits of burials varied somewhat during the MBA. The contents of OB burials at Ur, for example, ranged from modest ornamentation of the body to many tombs, allegedly undisturbed, with few if any offerings.[290] Nonetheless, the MBA in southern Mesopotamia saw an explosion in the inclusion of built tombs under homes, which heralded a significant change in burial customs.[291]

Space does not permit a lengthy excursus on burial rites associated with these interments. These are largely documented in texts, particularly the Mari archive, though they do reveal some correlations with excavated finds.[292] Debates continue concerning whether or not individual burial customs are evidence of the adherence to particular rituals that are so well-documented among OB texts. However, such a focus may overlook that ancestors played a significant role in the lives of the households of communities throughout the Fertile Crescent during the MBA, and in particular among Amorite communities. Indeed, the location of burial grounds among MBA communities suggests a significant way in which members of these communities negotiated

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[286] For example, Guy 1938: 61, 74, and 210.
[287] Baker 2012.
[288] Ibid.: 57–107.
[289] Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 194.
[290] Ibid.: 36–38.
[291] Laneri 2011; Laneri 2014.
[292] Felli 2012; Jacquet 2012.

their relationships with former generations through a preference for a shared locus for both the abodes of the living and the dead. Residences that housed the living members of an extended household therefore also housed the family's ancestors beneath their floors or in adjoining structures, and occasionally, when necessary, just outside the city's wall. As such, the home served as the ideal locus for linking former generations to the living household.[293] Where tumuli traditions persisted, as along the flanks of the Middle Euphrates and at Dilmun, these are arguably tied to burial customs associated with Amorite tribes and clans.

STATUS MARKING

In addition to legal and mortuary customs, a number of other elements of material culture also played a role as status markers in the Amorite world, ranging from economic to social and martial. Of particular note are cylinder seals, prestige weapons, and equid sacrifice, each of which possesses lengthy precursors. Many of these items are, however, explicitly identified with Amorites in textual sources during the MBA, suggesting their role as markers of prestige and status among Amorite communities.[294]

During the OB Period, sealing technology was exceedingly consistent across the Near East. Cylinder seals, as discussed in the preceding chapter, reveal an increasingly constrained selection of scenes, with a focus on the presentation scene (see Figure 4.2). Royal seals functioned as mini-murals, conveying the stature and divine sanction of the king. These seals, as with those of other elites, also varied regionally, incorporating local motifs and themes. In the Levant, for example, seal traditions incorporated Egyptian motifs such as the ankh, winged sun disk, and other Egyptianizing scenes.[295] Seals were symbols legitimating authority, applied as they were to a range of documents and sealing a variety of goods and even spaces. As such, their importance is occasionally remarked upon in texts.[296] Furthermore, the use of various precious stones for seals was a means of highlighting one's status as well, even while employing this common technology.

Among the most distinctive markers of social stratification and status among Amorite communities were particular weapon types among burials. During the first half of the MBA axes and daggers, often in association with decorated belts, persisted among so-called warrior burials.[297] References to prestige

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[293] This is not a new argument, as Woolley's own thoughts on Ur reveal (see Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 38–39).
[294] Weapons, see J. Vidal 2011.
[295] Collon 1987: 55; Teissier 1996.
[296] See ARM 2 115:9–17 in Sasson 2015: 113.
[297] Philip 1995; Philip 1989: 169–70.

weapons in the Mari letters, however, also reveal the prevalence of such weapons devoted in temples during the late MBA. Archaeological remains and textual sources demonstrate that prestige weapons were often cast in silver and gold, rather than bronze.[298] Amorite guards in Mari, were provisioned with prestige weapons such as silver spears.[299] The practice echoes early MBA evidence for silver and gold axes and daggers known from Byblos and sites in the southern Levant.[300] While the inclusion of prestige weapons in burials in the Levant was less common during the late MBA, when burials became increasingly communal, burials also became increasingly wealthier with greater quantities of luxury goods, ceramics, and offerings.[301] Status marking, which had previously focused almost exclusively on males, as marked by particular weapon types (see Chapter 4), now included females and children, often accompanied by jewelry, scarabs, and ivory-inlaid boxes.

Donkeys are also among a list of things often discussed in connection with Amorite status, including textual references to "Amorite" donkeys.[302] References in the Mari archives, in particular, provide a glimpse into cultural traditions connected with donkeys (*Equus asinus*), from their preference as a means of transportation to their central place in the sealing of treaties. Donkeys seem to have held a significant place among Mari's Amorite communities as the appropriate form of transport for Amorite rulers, if not elites more generally:

> Since you are (first) king of the . . . [Haneans] and you are, second, king of Akkad (land), my lord ought not to ride horses; rather it is upon a planquin or on mules that my lord ought to ride, and in this way he can pay honor to his majesty.[303]

In this sense, the donkey functioned as a high-end luxury vehicle, and thus not only as a means of conveyance but also as a marker of social identity and status. The difference between horses (*Equus caballus* or *Equus ferus przewalski*) and donkeys may therefore be understood as one of social differentiation, which was likely connected with the functions and values of these beasts for chariot warfare, caravaneering, and hauling.

Mari provides a further basis, however, for recognizing the importance attached specifically to donkeys, namely their sacrifice in the much-discussed treaty making ceremony known as the *ḥayaram qatālum* (lit. "slaughtering of an ass").[304]

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[298] Vidal 2011: 247–48.
[299] Ibid.: 249.
[300] Caspi, Ettedgui, Rivin, et al. 2009; Kaufman 2013.
[301] Hallote 1995: 111–15.
[302] See *amurrû* in *CAD* A/2, pp. 94.
[303] Translation of ARM 6 76: 20–24 by Sasson 2015: 70.
[304] ARM 2.37:11; see A.1056:9–10; A.2226:17, 15 in Finet 1993; Malamat 1995; see Charpin 2004: 300–01; Eidem 2011a.

On several different occasions it seems that Mari's king replaced puppies, goats, and calves, animals brought by representatives of Ida-maraṣ (of the Bensimalites), with donkeys for the sacrifice associated with the making of a treaty. Consequently, while the donkey's role for some sacrifices can be identified with Amorites at Mari and perhaps other Amorite communities, it cannot be regarded as a universal for all Amorites since the retinue from Ida-maraṣ belonged to a community that is also identified as Amorite.

Although they are associated with Amorite groups at Mari, this might not warrant any association of donkeys as a more broadly displayed marker of Amorite social identity per se, were it not for the interment of equids with humans in the Levant and the Egyptian Delta also during the second half of the MBA. While these are not easy to interpret,[305] they certainly reveal, first and foremost, the values placed on these animals, which would otherwise have been tossed into the town dump at the end of their lives, as in other periods. In the southern Levant, numerous equid burials were associated with cemeteries at Tell el-'Ajjul and Tell Jemmeh as well as in connection with the temple at Tel Haror.[306] The burials may be analogous with those at Avaris in the eastern Delta, where Manfred Bietak suggests that their appearance with Asiatic burials indicates that these individuals were caravaneers.[307] At Umm el-Marra in the northern Levant, for example, onagers appear with the processing of their leather hides. Furthermore, there are deliberate burials of what were likely sacrificed equids, echoing practices at the site in the second half of the third millennium.[308]

It may seem that these occurrences of deliberate donkey inhumations are unrelated. A closer examination of their geographic contexts suggests, however, their prevalence in regions at the limits of rainfall that permitted the existence of agropastoral settlements. Their significance in each context therefore centers on the particular value placed on these animals, which – to state the obvious – was greater than among communities that did not choose to sacrifice equids whether for the burial of elites or the formation of treaties and agreements. Put more simply, equids were seen as valuable commodities in their own right – status marking possessions – whether for their hides, their hauling capacity, or the ride they could provide. This imbued them with a fundamental value, particularly in regions where they provided economic security in one or another of these capacities. It was this cultural value connected with a specific social context that resulted in their preferential

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[305] For discussion, see Way 2010.
[306] Wapnish 1997.
[307] Bietak 1996: 25.
[308] Nichols and Weber 2006.

inclusion among sacrificial animals whether for burial rites, treaty making, or offerings to the gods. Thus, while not a universal marker of Amorite identity, such a unique treatment of equids was practiced among a number of Amorite communities across the Fertile Crescent.

MOBILE PERSONNEL

The influence of Amorite perceptions of kingship, cult, and status marking on communities across Southwest Asia during the MBA were amplified by a wide range of personnel who served as the principal conduits for cultural exchanges over long distances.[309] Whether merchants engaged in the movement of goods or a range of specialists who shuttled between states, the MBA witnessed a dramatic and steady uptick in both the mobility of personnel and the distances they traveled, which resulted in the creation of extensive networks of overland and maritime interactions linking the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean.[310] Kings were sometimes even forced to keep lower level administrators from gaining too much influence by moving them between territories and different communities.[311] While Mari's letters regarding Amorite customs may reveal Amorite traditions specific to Mari, the long-distance exchanges that often involved reciprocity meant that other states can be expected to have engaged in similar practices. Thus, mobility, as manifest through institutions of trade, craft specialists and court personnel, warfare and security services, and land tenure during the MBA all played a critical role in the development and propagation of a range of traditions increasingly identified with different Amorite communities.

Merchants

The most conspicuous of mobile activities during the MBA were networks of merchants who at times operated collectively within guilds or *karū*, which often took the physical form of enclaves of merchants. A range of artifacts reveals the geographic extent of these networks and suggest how for the first time in Near Eastern history trade regularly and robustly transcended not only geographic but also political boundaries. OB documents record an extremely wide range of goods exchanged across the Near East during this period, revealing the role that merchants, known as *tamkārū*, played as mediators between communities.[312] Although much trade continued to be palace-based,

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[309] See Durand 1992.
[310] Charpin 2003b.
[311] Villard 1995.
[312] Leemans 1950; Charpin 2003b.

by the late MBA it can be argued that merchants operated with an unprecedented degree of autonomy from state authorities doubtlessly aided by the sheer distance at which many merchants worked from their homelands. The role and power of individual families and kin groups in this process is revealed in OB letters, edicts, and laws.

The significance of the scale of overland trade during the OB Period might be best measured by references to *karū*, and the routes, size, and frequency of caravan traffic. Evidence from the Mari archive suggests that overland trade networks plied much of the Near East delivering a wide range of commodities by donkey caravans, which now ranged in size from a half-dozen to as many hundreds of donkeys.[313] In addition to the early textual data directly from the *kārum* at Kanesh, *karū* are attested at Babylon, Sippar, and Qatna,[314] for example, and archaeological evidence from other sites such as Shubat Enlil in the Jazira suggest the existence of others.[315] At Shubat Enlil, enclaves of merchants from Assur, Sippar, and various kingdoms from the Khabur region are attested.[316] Letters from Hazor reveal trade connections with Mari and Ekallatum.[317] Caravan route across the northern Sinai are even illustrated archaeologically, as for example in the small sites revealed by ceramic collections recovered from surveys of the region.[318]

A robust trade also existed at sea. The merchants of Ur are known to have conducted a brisk trade on the Persian Gulf, connecting Mesopotamia with Iran and Dilmun.[319] Merchants from Dilmun, modern Bahrain, conducted maritime trade with the Indus Valley and with inland powers such as Shubat Enlil.[320] Levantine ships likewise plied the coast of the eastern Mediterranean linking the Aegean, Crete, and Cyprus to Anatolia, the Levant, and the Egyptian Delta. During the MBA, Byblos, Ashkelon, and Avaris among a number of other ports flourished along and near the coast of the eastern Mediterranean. Artifacts from Byblos reveal a traffic in goods between Egypt and the Levantine coast, which had left an indelible imprint on the rulers of Byblos at the end of the MK. Offerings of vessels and jewelry included in the royal tombs of the Amorite kings of Byblos from the late MK reveal their importation from Egypt.[321] The bulk of the remains of this trade consisted of ceramic vessels – the containers for perfumes, oils, wine,

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[313] See also ARM 26/2, 432.
[314] For Babylon, see *Edict of Ammisaduqa*; for Sippar, CT 47/63. For Qatna, see ARM 26 530.
[315] Weiss, Akkermans, Stein, et al. 1990: 534–35.
[316] Eidem 2011b: 34–35.
[317] Horowitz and Wasserman 2000.
[318] Oren 1997b: 279, fig. 8.25.
[319] Oppenheim 1954.
[320] Eidem and Højlund 1993.
[321] Montet 1928; Dunand 1973 [orig. 1963 French].

foodstuffs, and trinkets as well as cedar in the form of coffins and wooden implements in Egypt.

The role that merchants played in the distribution of artifacts, materials, personnel, technologies, and ideas have long been regarded as central to the development of cultural interactions during the MBA from Mesopotamia to Egypt.[322] A growing list of archaeologically invisible commodities, such as clothing and textiles as well as exchanges in animals such as oxen, sheep, equids, exotic animals, and their byproducts suggest that these exchanges touched almost every area of economic activity. Sealings like those recovered from secondary contexts at Avaris point to the social and economic contacts of this eastern Delta community with Amorite communities in the Levant and Mesopotamia.[323] Some of the sealings are typical of Levantine communities.[324] In at least one case, the design on a sealing discarded in the area of the Hyksos palace at Avaris is suggested to be distinctly Babylonian.[325] Although dating them is dependent on their stylistic attributes, they are certainly situated within the context of long-distance trade during the second half of the MBA.

The royal tombs of the kings of Byblos provide perhaps the clearest index for the development of relations between Egypt and Byblos during this period.[326] The evidence for the adoption by Byblite royalty of Egyptian royal funerary accoutrements is extensive.[327] To what extent these reveal more than the outward appearances is hard to establish, though perhaps the divergence away from the chamber tombs such as at Qatna reveals the degree to which royalty at Byblos had appropriated Egyptian traditions by the LBA.

Clearly, many of these exchanges were palace-sponsored, though our sources tend to be biased toward the records of palaces. A wide range of exchanged items are mentioned, for example, in the correspondence of Zimri-Lim of Mari. Among the exchanged items were various types of jewelry, rings, seals, vessels, bows, slings, weapons, precious metals, clothes, and wine, which were either provided as gifts to rulers or donated to temples.[328] These tangible expressions of the fraternity of kingship left indelible marks upon these courts. However, ample room also existed for independent activities by merchants, the resulting effects of which were a further widening of the social networks through which the traditions of many Amorite communities were encountered and shared.

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[322] Also in Anatolia, see Larsen 1976 and for the Levant, see Gerstenblith 1983.
[323] This degree of recovery is owed to wet sieving of excavated soil matrices, a practice still not sufficiently embraced.
[324] Collon, Lehmann, and Müller 2012–2013; Von Koppen and Lehmann 2012–2013.
[325] Von Koppen and Lehmann 2012–2013.
[326] Flammini 2010.
[327] Schiestl 2007; Kopetzky 2015.
[328] Villard 1986: 389–92.

Artisans and Court Personnel

In addition to the movement of merchants, MBA sources such as the Mari archives refer to the exchange of personnel, from enslaved people to members of the royal household, and individuals with varied specializations ranging from construction to music.[329] Jack Sasson provides one of the most comprehensive lists of craftspersons who circulated among OB states during the times of Samshi-Adad and Zimri-Lim. Among the individuals mentioned in the Mari archive are:

> animal-fatteners (V:46:8–10), (lock) smiths (III:11:34–37; XIII:16:11–15; 40:13(?)), farmers (I:44:10–20; 68:5–12; V:54:5–13; XIII:5–11), diviners (II:15:10–18 (?)), singers (I:78; V:73:3'–19'; XIII:2s:39–47), "manual laborers" (*beʾru*, III:7:13–15), cooks (VI:24), reed-mat braiders (*atkuppum*, XIII:147:27–33), lance-makers (I:62:16'–24'), physicians (I:115:4–18; II:127:2–13; V:32:5–18; XIII:147:27–33), house-builders (II:101:8–31, 127:2–13), leather-workers (XIII:44:4–15), architects (DIM.GAL, III:47:5–10), gardeners (I:136:10–15 (?); XIII:40:7–10), perfume-makers (?) (II:136:10–13), riveters (XIII:16:16–25), carpenters (I:25:5–15; XIII:40:7–10), viticulturists (*sāmiḫum,* XIII:142:37–44), millers (V:28:5–8), *āḫizu*-men (II:96:8–17), and, finally scribes (I:7:32–45).[330]

Barbers, as well as entertainers (e.g., singers, instrumentalists, dancers, acrobats/gymnasts, jugglers, wrestlers) and stonemasons (notably *narû* carvers) can also be added to this list.[331]

While it is difficult to know what percentage of urban and non-urban populations were affected, no profession appears to have been outside the imaginable bounds of circulation. In light of the dynamic role that such individuals played in conveying and cultivating a koine material culture, they and their activities must be treated in a manner comparable to merchants and the cultural exchanges they embodied.

Despite how long we have been aware of the exchange of such a range of artisans and the extensive discussions they have received, little consideration has been given to the anthropological implications of these exchanges. From this perspective, however, it is evident that a wide range of activities in everyday life, not only for royalty but also for the average individual, would have been influenced by these movements. This included personal adornment (i.e., dress, hair styles, perfume), hygiene and health, culinary practices, recreation and leisure (i.e., entertainment), architectural and monumental traditions (i.e., domestic, palace, fortification, temple, and stele construction), land management (i.e., gardens and farms), military technologies, cultic rituals

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[329] See Sasson 1968; 2008; Durand 1992: 126–28; other essays in Charpin and Joannès 1992.
[330] See Sasson 1968: 48.
[331] Ibid.: 53; also Sasson 2008: 95–96.

(i.e., divination), and writing. To one degree or another, these exchanges impacted every sector of daily life, and did not require that these things only trickle down from elites, as many of these skills resulted in conspicuous changes to the material culture of everyday life. In fact, in many instances it is attested that the exchange of an individual specialist required a retinue of regular laborers who accompanied the specialist to carry out the work.[332] These individuals very often moved, therefore, in groups.

Sasson observes that special accommodations in Mari, for example, were arranged where skilled laborers from the kingdoms of Hazor, Yamḫad, Carchemish, and Emar resided together.[333] Artisans, if they were not enlisted locally to join a royal entourage, were sometimes war captives and hostages. Forced labor or corvée also often required the movement of personnel. Whether for *ilkum* service in Babylonia or *sablum* at Mari, from where the labor was conscripted depended on a variety of factors. The work varied from working royal estates to canal maintenance and fortification construction. Towns often sent a group of laborers when requested, and on some occasions sent far fewer than were required.[334] Some it seems received their training only after their capture, and many, particularly males, were maimed to prevent their flight. Sasson suggests that diviners and physicians were most frequently sought owing to endemic warfare during this period where one would "take the omen" while the other "dressed the wound."[335] The movements of personnel, like that of merchants contributed, therefore, to cultural exchanges that also furthered the development of an Amorite koine.

Armies, Mercenaries, and Brigands

As discussed earlier, military and mercenary service played an important role in cultural exchange during this period. Conflict mobilized armies across vast distances and often for military campaigns lasting many months. Even in this environment, however, brigandage remained a reality to long-distance travel for merchants and the many mobile personnel like those identified previously.[336] Consequently, it is of little surprise that some groups, such as the Suteans discussed earlier, subsisted, at least partly, on service as guides and security detail.[337] The nexus of travelers, brigands, and mercenary units were the many fortresses and smaller sites, such as Harradum or Dur-Abieshuh, that lay along the roads between the capitals of OB states. Even in such small places

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[332] Sasson 1968: 50.
[333] Ibid.: 53.
[334] ARM 3 6 (LAPO 17 800), see Sasson 2015: 1.3.d.v.1.
[335] Sasson 2008: 96n6.
[336] Charpin 2010; Richardson 2019a.
[337] Ziegler and Reculeau 2014.

the troops of Elamites, Kassites, Idamaras, and Suteans, for instance, could be found together.[338]

Land Tenure

Perhaps one of the most significant realizations regarding the movement of individuals during the MBA concerns land tenure. Land tenure as a factor in the mobility of personnel embodied the broadest possible meaning for this term, namely the care for or possession of land, principally with an intent to use the land for a particular purpose.[339] As such, during the MBA a number of land use patterns were predicated on or required the movement of individuals, but more often entire groups, who were responsible for the oversight of such holdings. Pastoralism, farming, resource extraction such as forestry or mining, homesteading, and the like required the movements of individuals, often entire households, and sometimes extended households and whole communities. Land tenure during the MBA could include whole territories, settlements, parts of settlements, but also holdings as small as households within another region or town. Possession of properties of different sizes within this hierarchy were, of course, predicated on social standing or service to the state. Consequently, the exchange of territories was presumably the exclusive domain of kings, while lesser officials of varying statuses could possess smaller settlements or domiciles within foreign communities. Soldiers also were remunerated through allotments of land during their lives with detailed rules, as revealed in late OB Sippar–Amnanum.[340] Although sources are limited, evidence from Ebla in the mid-third millennium reveals a long-lived tradition of the possession of distant estates by elites within large urban centers.[341] However, during the late MBA this phenomenon reached a level previously unseen.

Although our sources for the MBA traditionally hinge on the many corpora from Mesopotamia proper, from the second half of the MBA an important source for the discussion of land tenure are the archives of Level VII from Alalakh in the Levant.[342] These provide clear examples of noncontiguous landholdings during the MBA where individuals at Alalakh held lands on the other side of the parent kingdom of Yamḥad. A letter from Mari concerning land held in Alaḫtum (likely a reference to Alalakh) reveals the possibility of

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[338] Richardson 2019b: 226.
[339] See recent discussion of land tenure by Lauinger 2015: 7–9.
[340] De Graef 2002.
[341] Milano 1996: 40.
[342] Lauinger 2015.

the transfer of landholdings by elites, especially among royalty, as indicated in the full text of which the following is an excerpt:

> Hammurabi (i.e., of Yamḫad) gave the town of Alaḫtum to my lord. When he gave this town to . . . Yasmaḫ-Addu, who is frequently on message service to my lord, Hammurabi sent him along with the Chief Musician to Alaḫtum. He gathered the citizens of Alaḫtum and Yasmaḫ-Addu reiterated the orders of his lord (i.e., Hammurabi of Yamḫad), telling them: "My lord Hammurabi has given to Zimri-Lim the town Alaḫtum, its field, its vineyards, and the olive groves stretching from Alaḫtum's limits. From Alaḫtum must leave the elite (*wedūtum*), the home-owners (*maskanû*), the replacements (^{lú}diri.ga), and whoever holds or works land in Alaḫtum. On your part, get in touch with kin of yours who have gone to another town and bring back to Alaḫtum those who have settled elsewhere."[343]

The full text of the letter reveals that Zimri-Lim, king of Mari, had purchased Alaḫtum from Hammurapi, king of Yamḫad, and had begun to work the land and bring the town out of a state of ruin. This situation, however, does not appear to have been unique in the west, as in the kingdom of Yamḫad, but is also attested for the kingdoms centered on Mari and Shubat Enlil.[344] The king, following an age-old tradition, could also grant land to individuals for service or loyalty.

> All the servants of my lord know that I held land in Qattunan. But now God spoke and the one with right has returned to his right. Now, if it pleases my lord, he should give me a field in Qattunan, so that I could be counted among my lord's servants at the river bank. Me, I am not a *feckless* servant; rather, I am your loyal servant and your farmer. My Lord must not count me among all (others). A property of my lord I truly am. My lord should not deny me a field.[345]

Land, including vineyards, and settlements could also be purchased outright, as in the case of this large transaction by the "overseer of the merchants" of Yamḫad:

> Irpa-Addu has purchased (the settlements of) Šallun, Tarmanne, Amakwan, together with their *pāṭum*'s (and) *eperū* of (the settlements of) Igar, Šibte, Halba, Ure, and Erirambi – and he (Irpa-Addu) will check these landholdings, wherever they are, before he takes (them) – from Labbina for 3800 shekels of silver.[346]

[343] See 1.3.e.iv. Sasson 2015: 66.
[344] Durand 2002; Durand 1998: 518–19; Ristvet 2008.
[345] See 1.4.a.ii. Sasson 2015: 68.
[346] AlT 56 [22.05]. Translation by Lauinger 2015: 1.

Land tenure, as in other institutions of the age, therefore involved the movement of personnel associated with estates and property held in often distant, noncontiguous territories. Given the obligations that these tenures appear to have required of their caretakers, keeping them productive was essential. Individuals who possessed such lands were liable to provide proceeds from and/or corvée labor (e.g., *ilkum* and other forms) associated with these properties unless legal documentation provided them with an exemption. While texts referring to these practices do not provide many explicit references to the movement of personnel associated with these arrangements, the assumption must be that managing such distant properties was not a simple affair but required fairly intensive oversight, particularly to meet contractual obligations in addition to the basic concerns inherent in their routine management. To do so required at a minimum regular communication between the holder and a steward of the property, but almost certainly occasional visits to these estates for hands-on decision making and oversight. Such visits were also unlikely to have been made solely (or necessarily) by the tenant, but likely included a retinue, as with the artisans discussed earlier. The individuals involved in these movements therefore included a range of social classes and specialists, all of them purveyors of a broad set of traditions from their own communities as well as those among the communities with which they interacted.

THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL POWER

While the foregoing discussion offers a perspective on the construction of Amorite identities based on a range of common practices (*oikoumene*) often evidenced in shared elements of material culture (koine), evidence for rejection of and indifference to aspects of Amorite identity are also crucial to illustrating its significance and its limits. The evidence from regions at the edges of the Amorite *oikoumene* reveal that the customs associated with Amorite communities were not universally or equally embraced everywhere they were encountered, whether because individuals were ignorant of, indifferent to, or overtly rejected its potential association with Amorite groups. OB textual sources remind us, of course, that a variety of other identities were also conspicuous among MBA societies, such as Akkadians, Hurrians, Elamites, and many others, each of whom presumably also bore various markers of their identity, though these require their own study. Even the archaeological records of each region in which the Amorite koine appears exhibit, for example, unique expressions of material culture that suggest the persistence of a range of local traditions that existed alongside Amorite traditions. This occurred despite the emphasis that many Amorites appear to have placed upon an array of customs within this *oikoumene* and the material culture or koine that marked them as such.

While indifference is hard to identify, rejection and resistance to traditions may be manifest in many ways and must be considered in order to permit a more symmetrical analysis of interactions between Amorite and non-Amorite groups.[347] Although a fuller accounting for diversity, nonconformity, and discontinuity within Amorite lands should be undertaken in the future, several conspicuous examples may serve to illustrate not only the potential for resistance to traditions that may have been associated with Amorites, but also the extent of selective participation in the Amorite *oikoumene*. Particularly at the end of the OB Period, several cases may illustrate the rejection of Amorite customs and Amorite hegemony in parts of the Near East during the MBA.

The Hyksos and Their Expulsion, 1664–1555 BC

The presence of Asiatics in Egypt during the MK has been thoroughly explored in the preceding chapters.[348] By the second half of the MBA, Asiatics had inhabited the eastern Nile Delta for centuries (Figure 5.14). On the basis of cultural elements associated with an Amorite koine, Avaris, Tell el-Mashkuta, and Tell el-Retaba all reveal the existence of Amorite enclaves along the maritime and overland routes from the Levant and its coast leading into the Nile Valley.[349] Yet resistance to Amorite presence toward the end of the MBA exposes a cultural rejection and not simply political resistance to this presence.

After the MK, during the Fourteenth Dynasty, Avaris achieved an independent status within a politically divided Egypt. This intermediate phase of political realignment would ultimately provide a context for the usurpation of power by Asiatics toward the close of the eighteenth century BC. If the reign of the local dynast Nehesy, who is attested in inscriptions in the eastern Delta provides any indication, the rulers of this dynasty even facilitated the incorporation of Amorite religious traditions. Among these may have been the elevation of Seth, the Egyptian equivalent of Ba'al or Hadad the storm god, to chief god of the city, as suggested by an epithet of Nehesy.[350]
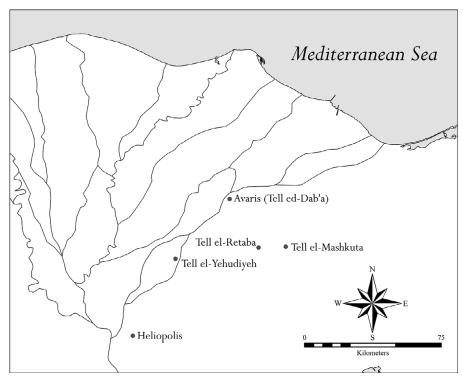
By the start of the Fourteenth Dynasty evidence for the Amorite koine was already writ large at Avaris, despite the persistence of Egyptian settlement as reflected in the material culture. In Area A/II (Strata F–E/2), two Levantine Amorite-style temples were built, as discussed earlier. Temple III, to the extent that its plan can be reconstructed, appears to belong to the direct-axis type,

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[347] Dietler 2010: 10.
[348] Bietak 2006.
[349] Redmount 1995; Holladay 1997; Rzepka, Hudec, Wodzińska, et al. 2014; Rzepka, Hudec, Jarmużek, et al. 2015.
[350] Bietak 1996: 41.

5.14 Map of eastern Delta sites with Asiatic enclaves.
Map by Amy Karoll.

common to the Levant during the MBA (Figure 5.13), while temple II was of
the so-called *Breithaustempel* type.[351] Even so, mortuary complexes surrounding
these temples maintained a clear Egyptian style.[352]

By 1664 BC, members of this Semitic population came to power and
identified themselves as the *ḥḳ3 ḫ3swt* (Greek "Hyksos"), meaning "foreign
rulers," who were eventually classified as the Fifteenth Dynasty.[353] Close
scrutiny of the personal names of these rulers, which only appear in Egyptian
inscriptions and king lists, as well as among the work of later Greek historians,
suggests that the Hyksos rulers were not simply Semitic, but properly speaking,
related to Amorite groups from the Levant (Table 5.1).[354] Material remains
from the Second Intermediate Period excavated at Avaris since 1966 provide a
detailed picture of the identities of its inhabitants, which included Egyptians,
Amorites, likely Kushites, and individuals of mixed heritage resulting from

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[351] Bietak 2003.
[352] Bietak 1996: 47–48.
[353] For a long time this was mistranslated as "shepherd king" (see Bietak 2001b: 136).
[354] Donald Redford appears to be the first to have asserted that the Hyksos were Amorites on
the basis of their names; see 1970: 20n4. Also Schneider 1998.

TABLE 5.1. *Hyksos (Fifteenth Dynasty) rulers (dates after Redford 2001)*

Egyptian Name	Greek	Reign	Inscriptions
Maa-ibre Sheshy	Salitis/Saites	1664–1662	Scarabs
Mer-userre Ya'akob-har	Bnon	1662–1653	Scarabs
Seuserenre Khayan	(A)pachnan	1653–1614	Scarabs
[...] Yansas-adoen	Iannas	1614–1605	Stele
Aa-woserre Apophis	Apophis	1605–1565	Scarabs; monuments
[...] *Hamudi*		1565–1555	

intermarriages between these groups.[355] During Hyksos rule at the end of the MBA (Strata E/2-D/2), settlement at Avaris reached 250 hectares with a population of likely more than 25,000 inhabitants. Due to settlement and population growth, tracts of housing were constructed in some areas previously occupied by cemeteries.[356] Considering this rate of growth, the emergence of Hyksos rule appears to have been an exogenous phenomenon. The sprawling suburbs of Levantine courtyard-style houses to the east and south (Area A/V, str. E/1-D/2) are suggestive of the population's cultural ties.[357] The mudbrick built tombs during this phase, in contrast to the earlier ones in 'Ezbet Helmi, were placed within houses, sometimes within their courtyards and often adjacent an inner room, which were clearly intended to function in the same fashion as residential funerary complexes in the Levant and Mesopotamia.[358] Indeed, their similarity to mudbrick built tombs at Ashkelon outside the MB IIC gate in Grid 2,[359] and tombs at Jericho, might further suggest their Levantine associations. This above-ground style of tomb construction, inasmuch as it may be viewed as a derivation of earlier above-ground burials at Avaris, can be compared with burial practices in New Orleans that employ above-ground burial structures due to the high water table.

The weakened state of Egypt combined with an increasing population of Amorites had made conditions favorable for Amorite rule. As discussed earlier, this was the setting for the Hyksos palace, so-called citadel, that appears to have featured murals produced in the Aegean fresco technique built in Ezbet Helmi (Area F/II). The palace's architectural style, as noted by Bietak, does not conform to known Egyptian types, but rather bears greater resemblance to Near Eastern exemplars as at Ebla.[360] Several lines of evidence also suggest that

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[355] Bader 2011a; Bader 2011b; Bader 2012; Bader 2013.
[356] Bietak 1996: 49.
[357] Hein and Jánosi 2004.
[358] Bietak 1996: 49, 54.
[359] Voss 2002: 384, fig. 5.
[360] Bietak, Math, Müller, et al. 2012.

the independent kingdom of the Hyksos was increasingly isolated from the rest of Egypt, with ties predominantly with the Levant. By the close of the Fourteenth Dynasty (Strata E/3), Levantine-style ceramics, for example, represented only 22.2 percent of the overall assemblage, and imports likewise fell to half their earlier total, at 13.9 percent of the total assemblage.[361] There is no evidence of trade contact with regions to the south of the Delta,[362] which may be read as evidence of its political and cultural isolation from Egypt that likely resulted from its increasing Amorite connections, which oriented its political and cultural relations to the southern Levant and regions beyond. Ties with Mesopotamia are evident in the aforementioned OB letter found in the palace, but also in a collection of inscribed objects from Khayan gifted to rulers in Mesopotamia.[363]

Evidence for the rejection of Amorite rule and influence at Avaris arrived at the end of the MBA with the emergence of the early Eighteenth Dynasty. It is nowhere more evident than several early New Kingdom texts about the Hyksos. It likely enshrines the sentiments of many Egyptians from the time of Sekenenre Tao II (1600–1571 BC) until the final expulsion of the Hyksos under Kamose.

> I have not slept forgetfully, (but) I have restored that which had been ruined. I have raised up that which had gone to pieces *formerly,* since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and vagabonds were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which had been made. They ruled without Re, and he did not act by divine command down to (the reign of) my majesty.
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>   . . .
>
>   Now it so happened that the land of Egypt was in distress. There was no Lord or king of the time. However, it happened that, as for King Seqnen-Re: he was Ruler of the Southern City. Distress was in the town of the Asiatics, for Prince Apophis was in Avaris, and the entire land was subject to him with their dues, the north as well, with all the good produce of the Delta. Then King Apophis made him Seth as lord, and he would not serve any god who was in the land [except] Seth. And [he] built a temple of good and eternal work beside the House of [King Apo]phis [and] he appeared [every] day to have sacrifices made . . . daily to Seth.[364]

The rejection of a singular worship of Seth, who had come to be equated with Baal, is one line of evidence for the broader cultural rejection of Amorite rule in Egypt that took on political force from the reign of Sekenenre. Ultimately,

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[361] Bietak 2010: 152.
[362] Bietak 2001a: 352.
[363] Bietak, Math, Müller, et al. 2012: 25–26.
[364] *ANET*, p. 231.

efforts by Kamose (1571–1569 BC), the last pharaoh of the Seventeenth Dynasty, and Ahmose (1569–1545 BC), the first pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, to restore centralized Egyptian rule from Thebes led to the expulsion of the Hyksos from Avaris, which was then followed by campaigns against allied Amorite states in the southern Levant, such as Sharuhen.[365]

Old Assyrians and the Amorites

A comparable rejection of Amorite influence is suggested in northern Mesopotamia at Ashur after Shamshi-Adad was deposed by Puzur-Sin (1781–? BC). The ensuing events suggest the severity of this rejection and the vehemence that was occasionally, no doubt, directed at visible symbols of Amorite rule, such as the palace.

> When Puzur-Sin, vice-regent of the god Ashur, *son of* Ashur-bēl-shame, destroyed the evil of Asinum, offspring of Shamshī-[Adad (i)] who was . . . of the city Ashur, and instituted *proper rule* for the city Ashur; (at that time) [I (Puzur-Sin) *removed*] . . . a foreign *plague,* not of the flesh of [the city] Ashur. . . .The god Ashur justly. . . [with] his pure hands and I, by the command of Ashur himself my lord, destroyed that improper thing which he had worked on, (namely) the *wall* and palace of Shamshī-Adad (I) his grandfather (who was) a foreign *plague,* not the flesh of the city Ashur, and who had destroyed the shrines of the city Ashur.[366]

Puzur-Sin goes on to describe his construction of a new city wall and its dedication to the city's deities. As such, this sole inscription attributable to Shamshi-Adad's deposer suggests an alternative perspective to the reception of Amorite rule and its symbols. It also reveals that Amorite rulers, inasmuch as they may neglect reference to it, very likely did as other founding rulers did and built new palaces and temples in the wake of their ascendance, a process that was likely not always well received but, in some instances, was remembered for the antipathy it engendered.

   That Amorite identity was not, however, particularly well received among Assyrians may also be evident from an OA tale structured off the story *Sargon King of Battle*. While much debate exists concerning how this text should be read, it preserves a series of less than charming characterizations of groups with whom Assyrian merchants had regular contact.[367] As such, it references the inhabitants of Alashiya (Cyprus), Kanesh, Hatti, and various other groups. Concerning Sargon's conquests of the Amorites it states: "As to the Amorites, instead of tearing off their nose, I cut off their penis." Whatever

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[365] *ANET*, pp. 232–234.
[366] *RIMA* 1.A.0.40.1001.
[367] See Alster and Oshima 2007, and bibliography therein.

the final decision may be regarding how to best read this tale, in light of the role of Akkadian legends during this period, it is hard to ignore that Sargon's conquests stand in for the author's animus regarding the groups mentioned.

Segregation in Babylonia?

The limits of social integration between those identifying as Amorites and non-Amorites also seem conspicuous in one well-known OB *mišarum* (justice) edict from southern Mesopotamia. The best preserved of these is the so-called *Edict of Ammisaduqa* (r. 1647–1625 BC), the tenth ruler after Hammurapi of Babylon.[368] In this edict, the repeated qualification "an Akkadian or an Amorite" seems to underscore that the edict applied to both identity groups equally. It also highlights that Akkadian was not simply a geographic term applied to the inhabitants of the northern part of Babylonia, but that it included non-Amorite inhabitants under Babylonian rule. It is reasonable to assume that such qualifications were regarded as necessary, lest one or the other group have had grounds to consider themselves exempt from the edict's stipulations. While it is difficult to be certain of the full implications of such qualifications, that these occur relatively late within the OB Period suggests that social divisions persisted or had resurfaced between different groups, exposing social rifts between Amorites and communities they ruled.

THE END OF AN AGE

Like the examples of the spatial and territorial limits of Amorite identity, the social power associated with Amorite identity was constrained by a gradual loss of military, political, and economic power. In the east, the end effectively accompanied the closing of the OB Period. The sack of Ḥalab, and presumably many of Yamḥad's holdings in the northern Levant, was followed by the fall of Babylon and its own sacking in 1595 BC. This is traditionally identified as the reason for the demise of the First Dynasty of Babylon, the most politically successful perhaps of any of the Amorite dynasties of the period. However, a more nuanced, recent perspective on the end of Babylon suggests that, in fact, one of the factors contributing to the original spread of the Amorite *oikoumene*, namely mercenary factions, may well have contributed also to the weakening of central rule in Babylonia (if not farther afield), opening the door to its decline from within.[369] Nevertheless, the process was certainly gradual.[370]

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[368] *ANET*, pp. 526–528.
[369] Richardson 2019b.
[370] Kuhrt 1995: 115–16.

Murshili I's campaigns were not, however, the only disruption wrought on the region's fraternity of Amorite kings. In the Levant, following the expulsion of the Hyksos, Egypt began a process of imperial expansion that gave rise to the northern holdings of the New Kingdom's empire in Canaan. This was preceded by a series of ad hoc military endeavors both in the southern Levant, only some of which can be attributed to specific rulers,[371] and into the northern Levant, dealing political rule by Amorites yet another blow. In the wake of Murshili's conquests followed a radical disruption of political independence, a large part of the apparatus responsible for the dissemination of Amorite traditions. Although it can be argued that many traditions associated with the Amorites koine during the MBA persisted, their evident associations with Amorite identity were gradually eclipsed and mostly forgotten.

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[371] Burke 2010.

CONCLUSION

Amorite Identity in the Longue Durée

T he attempt of this work to review the evidence for and nature of Amorite
identity through an examination of historical, iconographic, and archaeo-
logical sources from the mid-third to the mid-second millennium may elicit
questions concerning the actual value of the study of a label such as "Amorite"
over such a lengthy span of time. The underlying premise of this work is,
however, that the study of Amorite identity for any period cannot be under-
taken without a thoroughgoing effort to understand the cultural memories and
influences as well as earlier historical events that played a role in the reception
of previous traditions and their later interpretations. To this diachronic aspect is
also added a geographic scope, which points to the way in which different
cultures viewed Amorites and their traditions. While, as has been demonstrated
in this work, few such sources directly address these questions, it remains
possible to establish the broad social, economic, political, and cultural contexts
that influenced these perceptions. Although this is by no means the last word,
it is my hope that this effort raises issues that transcend the space, time, and
methods that often limit attempts to get at the varied and complex issues
inherent to the study of identity in the *longue durée*.

The broad span of time associated with this study has required a flexible
approach that is both historically and culturally nuanced. It has also led to the
identification of various factors and institutions that played a central role in the
creation and maintenance of Amorite identity and its varied expressions (see
Chapter 1). It is impossible to distill shifts in the social complexity behind

identity down to only individual institutions, historical circumstances, specific cultural contexts, or environmental and geographical factors alone. Rather, each played varied roles through time such that it is fair to say that the application of the label "Amorite" may be the only constant in a study of Amorite identity. Nevertheless, given that so many ethnicons have faded from historical memory, it must from the start be regarded as worthy of study that any identity, even if seemingly only as a label, should endure for such a long period and carry with it such significance.

Here, by way of conclusion, we may recognize that this historical reconstruction of the increasing visibility of Amorite identity shares much in common with what the social historian Michael Mann identifies as the "sources of social power."[1] This is all the more true by the end of the MBA when Amorite identity was fundamentally social, culminating from a long arc of historical circumstances and institutional developments. In his work, Mann identifies these sources as fourfold, "ideological, economic, military, and political," which he describes as "overlapping networks of social interaction," but also "organizations, institutional means of attaining human goals." A review, therefore, of the individual phases within the historical arc of the Amorite experience, as articulated in this work, exposes the degree to which this framework supports how and why Amorite groups ultimately possessed such social power, and allows us to recognize why that social power eventually eroded.

IDENTITY IN THE MAKING

While many questions remain about the localization of Amorites during the mid-third millennium BC (ca. 2500–2200 BC), as explored in Chapter 2, sources such as the Ebla archives and Mesopotamian texts allow the localization of Amorite communities across a region from the kingdom of Ebla to southern Mesopotamia. Yet in line with many earlier characterizations based on textual sources, the epicenter of Amorite communities was the bend in the Euphrates River. Here the Euphrates bisects a contiguous steppe zone that forms a transition from the more humid regions to the north and west, and the Arabian Desert to the south. Settlement extensification in this steppic region throughout the first half of the third millennium BC contributed to the emergence of a nearly continuous band of agropastoral communities that exploited even the most marginal fringes of this territory, which is referred to as the "zone of uncertainty" for the risks that agropastoralism faced at the limits of both rainfed agriculture and pastoralism.

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[1] Mann 2012: 2.

The intensification of settlement within this ecological niche created unique economic opportunities for its agropastoral communities. While the herding of sheep for the production of wool to be turned into textiles was a central element of their subsistence, as demonstrated in the Ebla texts, sites such as Umm el-Marra reveal that the hunting and capture of onagers for their hides, as well as the rearing of donkeys were also major economic activities for these steppic communities. Such circumstances suggest this as the socioeconomic context for most references to Amorites from around Ebla in the Levant to the Zagros Mountains of eastern Mesopotamia. These communities appear to have been deliberately founded by "anchor communities" such as Ebla, Tuttul, Chuera, Mari, and Urkesh, which served as markets for the wool produced from their herds. The material culture of these communities reveals that intensive social and economic contacts were cultivated between them as well as with their parent settlements.

The geographic delineation of this zone and the primary localization of references to Amorites within it suppose, therefore, that a number of settlements across this region likely hosted whole early communities and tribes that were collectively labeled by outside, mostly southern Mesopotamian communities, as Amorite. In addition to Umm el-Marra, al-Rawda, and its neighboring communities located along the *très long mur* are among the premier candidates for identification as examples of such communities. That said, it should not be ignored that these settlements and certainly others in different parts of the zone of uncertainty, such as Chuera, Urkesh, or Nagar, for example, comprised mixed communities that included Subareans in the north and even Gutians in the east. It is for this reason that the material culture of these settlements, while sharing some elements in common, are also not homogenous, featuring a mixture of traditions representative of their mixed cultural heritage across this open landscape.

Within this broad ecological zone, a highly specialized economy connected with what I call agropastoral "communities of practice," contributed to the formation of distinct social collectives and likely realignments among the region's tribal constituencies. This might be likened to an ethnogenesis, though it is beyond our sources to reconstruct in detail. These communities reveal degrees of interconnection and communication across this zone that are further exposed by texts concerning military activity throughout this region by polities such as Ebla, Mari, and Nagar. Socioeconomic interdependence of smaller agropastoral communities played a central role in cultural exchanges throughout this region, often transcending traditional reconstructions of political hegemony in the region, as might be defined by state interests or imperial claims to these territories. The likelihood of intermarriages between members of these agropastoral communities reminds us of one of the most powerful mechanisms behind social interactions and the creation of kinship bonds on this economic frontier.

While the cultural traditions of settlements in the zone of uncertainty share much in common because of their socioeconomic contexts, they appear to reveal the incorporation of traditions from their founding communities. The similarity in their radially oriented plans that are encircled by fortifications, for example, suggests a high degree of planning from the outset, which would be commensurate with their foundations during a discrete moment by proactive central authorities. The decentralized locations of temples underscores, however, that ritual practices centered on smaller social units within these towns, likely associated with individual tribal identities, with temples located within quarters and thus serving separate constituencies, rather than being concentrated in a central location. Still, a wide adoption of the direct-axis temple *in antis* plan among these communities is a major element reflective of the cultural exchanges these communities shared with their founding communities and, potentially, of horizontal relationships among these "communities of practice." These and other customs, such as burial practices, reveal that a constellation of material culture associated with particular practices are in evidence among these communities, which resulted from the negotiation of intersecting spheres of social, economic, and political influence. Consequently, many practices can also be identified, as might be expected, among founding communities such as Ebla or among sedentary communities in the hinterlands of such centers. Although it is likely that often the nearest major centers should be implicated in the foundation of the agropastoral centers nearest to them, textual evidence for discontiguous polities during the MBA reminds us that more distant centers may also have been responsible for some of these foundations. This then may further strengthen the argument that shared practices between new agropastoral towns and the region's larger centers contributed to the shared traditions in urban planning, defenses, temple architecture, cultic expression, and burial practices.

It is with such considerations in mind that we can best understand the original use of the Sumerian label mar-tu and later Akkadian *amurru* for the inhabitants of lands to the west of Sumer, which the term exposes. In this sense, the term appears to have been employed in a fashion closer to a traditional *ethnic* label and therefore bore political-geographical implications. The designation, while evidently originated as a geographic term, "west" or "westerner," implied however an affiliation – a lumping of what were most likely diverse groups, mostly tribes, into a collective as a matter of administrative and political expedience. Given the use of the term at Ebla – where there is no basis for its identification with a social entity to Ebla's west – it is almost certain that the term originated quite early in the third millennium in Sumer, whether or not it actually referred in its earliest use to a specific indigenous group or tribe. Seemingly to be distinguished from the core inhabitants of the region who identified with the capital cities of their

respective polities such as Nagar, Mari, or Ebla, Amorite communities had their own settlements and leaders as well as social and political organization. They appear to have occupied a unique socioeconomic niche that existed within and between the territorial claims of northern Mesopotamian and Levantine polities. Therefore, traditional characterizations of the mobile or nomadic character of Amorites in later literature may be understood predominantly as a reflex of a cultural memory of the agropastoral roots of these Amorite communities, though this continued to play an important role through the end of the third millennium.

Although agropastoralist activity throughout the zone of uncertainty grew steadily throughout the third millennium, it faced two primary challenges: intervention by southern Mesopotamian military powers and changing environmental conditions. Increasing military activity by local but also especially by distant states introduced a degree of instability perhaps principally to the primary markets and main polities of the region from the mid-third millennium. While rivalries even between the region's major states may have disrupted the zone's steady economic ascent, intervention by southern Mesopotamian states brought still more uncertainty. Akkadian imperial control of northern Mesopotamia under Sargon and his immediate successors left a visible imprint on the Jazira. This intervention disrupted the region's social and economic activities through the taking of prisoners of war and the emplacement of centers of imperial control and taxation within the region.

Although recovery from occasional flares in imperial intervention may have been possible, a precipitous decline in environmental conditions necessary for the support of intensive agropastoralism across much of northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant around 2200 BC followed on the heels of Akkadian intrusions exacerbating these challenges. For settlements located at the edges of this marginal zone a decline in annual rainfall below 200 mm spelled the abandonment of herding and the rainfed agriculture upon which most of these communities had for so long relied for their subsistence. How rapidly aridification occurred and, consequently, how different communities in the Fragile Crescent reacted remain major questions. Certainly, some settlements were less affected than others, which has confounded identification of the general challenge faced by these ancient communities across this transitional steppe land. Still, it is now impossible to ignore that these broad conditions contributed to the decline of settlement across this marginal steppe in the years after 2200 BC.

Whether or not we can speak of Amorites as a distinct ethnicity – a word unknown to Akkadian – it seems that the foregoing reconstruction of early Amorites meets the core requirements of "social reproduction, subsistence production, and self-identification" that are anticipated by an archaeological

definition of communities.[2] A textured understanding of "resource exploit-ation" by the inhabitants of communities across this distinct "paleoenviron-mental" zone, and evidence of their monuments, all contribute to the identification of distinct communities. Because of this, it is preferred to speak of Amorite communities, while recognizing that the term's use occurs exclu-sively among outside sources. Thus, it remains unnecessary and unhelpful to assert that these communities were socially or culturally homogenous, as the limited use of the term Amorite among third-millennium sources might lead us to conclude. With no clear evidence either for a self-consciousness as Amorite by these early communities, nor for a shared sense of origins, it is impossible to speak of those identified as Amorites in this period beyond the etic perspective provided by what can be considered the creation of an ethnic label. Nevertheless, there are solid grounds for understanding how shared socioeconomic and historical experiences fostered solidarity among these communities and contributed to social cohesion among displaced members of Amorite communities in the following period.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The final two centuries of the third millennium reveal the extent to which environmental and political conditions created a shared social and economic experience among communities across the Fragile Crescent. In some sense, the social and economic disruptions related to both violence and displacement for these communities created conditions that mimic social transformations that were often typical of imperial rule across a vast territory. However, the changes documented took place primarily after imperial intervention. Temple types, town planning, and fortification construction were not forced on these communities by foreign powers. Nevertheless, the demise of centralized rule by both Egypt's OK and Mesopotamia's Akkadian Empire contributed to a contemporaneous period of transition that affected much of the Near East. A major consequence of this was the cessation of political and military intervention in northern Mesopotamia and the Levant, but also an environ-ment of decreasing security.

The absence of historical records from this broad region during the last two centuries of the third millennium has resulted in interpretations that downplay the critical importance of this period in understanding the realignment of socioeconomic and political power and the negotiation of identities by the region's inhabitants. However, it was on the heels of this transition that new states, with little relationship to those of the third millennium, emerged.

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[2] Kolb and Snead 1997: 611–12.

Previously identified as a period of "collapse," closer examination of the changes underway between 2200 and 2000 BC suggests not only resilience despite major political, economic, and social upheaval, but also extensive efforts to adapt to these changes that created the context for significant cultural transformations. While early scholarship had emphasized pastoral nomadism as a strategy of resilience – largely because of both the perception that mobility created socioeconomic flexibility and that the study of this form of mobility was in vogue at the time – pastoral nomadism played only a limited role in the broader cultural changes underway. Outside of the Mari letters, pastoralist activity seems to have played less and less of a role in Amorite identity across the Near East from the late third millennium on. Rather, this form of subsistence was only associated with Amorite communities who returned to exploiting the zone of uncertainty when agropastoralism resumed in the years after 1900 BC. Thus, Mari offers a window into only one regional expression of Amorite identity – if an important one – in an emerging Amorite *oikoumene*.

If the pastoral–nomadic model of Amorite identity identified one universal in the question of Amorite identity, it was mobility. However, this mobility was not that of herders engaged in habitat tracking, but rather of refugees abandoning their towns, villages, and former pasturelands to seek economic refuge wherever they were able. The environmental changes precipitating this migration are identified with the onset of the Megalayan (ca. 2200 BC), the phase of the Holocene that persists until today. Through what was likely a discrete period of chain migration, the zone of uncertainty witnessed one of the largest episodes of out-migration due to changing environmental conditions ever witnessed. With the effective decline of much of this agropastoral frontier, it is estimated that between three hundred thousand but perhaps as many as five hundred thousand inhabitants across the zone of uncertainty were compelled to relocate to more clement environs. Riparian zones such as the Euphrates and Tigris valleys could, however, only accommodate a certain percentage of those displaced by these conditions. As refugees, not only Amorites but likely Subareans, Gutians, Elamites, and other groups exploited their social and economic networks to relocate, effectively reversing the very processes that had originally contributed to the establishment of these marginal communities. These ties no doubt influenced both the direction and rate of migration by inhabitants out of this region. For this reason, flight out of the Jazira, in particular, likely assumed a number of different trajectories into the northern Levant, southern Anatolia, western Iran, and southern Mesopotamia in the decades after 2200 BC.

By employing an approach that highlights an archaeology of refugees, a number of aspects of the late third-millennium archaeological record can be understood from a different perspective. While abandonment characterized many settlements in marginal zones at the end of the third millennium, others

evidently experienced growth ranging from modest to radical. Given the limits of and challenges to ancient population growth, any growth under the declining environmental conditions of the late third millennium, which persisted through about 1900 BC, is noteworthy. The growth of urban centers along the Euphrates basin such as Mari, as well as in Sumer, must therefore be considered in the context of mobile groups seeking refuge probably initially primarily among kin groups. Sumerian urban centers, as well as towns along the Euphrates Valley appear to have served, therefore, as host communities to refugees fleeing the zone of uncertainty. Nevertheless, the archaeological signature of such changes remains inconspicuous at the household level, undoubtedly in part the result of kin and other relationships that were exploited in these relatively short-distance movements. For instance, to date it remains impossible to identify ceramic attributes associated with the movement of any groups into southern Mesopotamia during the late third millennium, despite the fact that the region evidently witnessed significant influxes of outside groups, who alongside Amorites, included Subareans, Elamites, and Gutians. Most of the initial movements were likely less than 100 km in distance, and it is entirely possible that the "draw down" in the population of marginal zones was multi-decadal, further confounding attempts to reach a scholarly consensus on the phenomenon.

Still, in addition to settlement growth in the Euphrates Valley and among Sumerian cities, settlement growth also occurred in landscapes around Ebla, Qatna, the Orontes Valley, and the Akkar Plain in the northern Levant. Although spotty, archaeological evidence from the eastern Nile Delta suggest that Asiatic (ꜥꜣmw) settlements were likely a reflex of demographic pressure in the southern Levant. This was by no means either a demographic tsunami or an invasion. However, given the sustained pressure created by the onset of aridification across much of the Fertile Crescent's arable land, its effects likely even affected Egypt, as least in this fashion indirectly, irrespective of any environmental decline experienced in Egypt itself. In this respect, favorable conditions for resettlement in a new location were relative to those in the region that was being abandoned.

A major aid in the long-term processes of resettlement and integration was, somewhat ironically, the efforts of other foreigners who achieved power during this period and their experience, though less explored, may largely parallel that of Amorite groups. In Sumer, following the fall of the Akkadian Empire, a power vacuum existed in which foreigners, notably Gutians from the east, achieved political power and appear to have primed conditions for the social and political elevation of foreigners such as Amorites. Notable among such figures was Gudea during the Second Dynasty of Lagash (2150–2111 BC), who appears to have inaugurated a style of kingship that, while drawing heavily upon that of his predecessors, was a unique product of his own efforts.

Insofar as our sources expose his achievements as *sui generis*, we are able to attribute to him efforts to maintain social order at a time of considerable political and social fragmentation. The massive building projects attributed to Gudea, outside of the context of any empire but quite ambitious, and those of his Ur III successors may be understood, at least in part, as shrewd endeavors to incorporate new immigrants and to solidify his support under these difficult conditions. This is at least one possible component to what were regarded as elements in a traditional process of royal legitimation. Nonetheless, building came with feasting and other forms of social support for participants, which would have made such endeavors highly welcomed by dependent foreign communities.[3]

Gudea also cultivated another element that would become important to the image of Amorite dynasts in the centuries to follow, namely the archetype of the king as "good shepherd" to his people. Not only was royal patronage of monument building essential to this image, but also the precise manifestations that these efforts assumed. He engaged, for example, in long-distance resource-procurement expeditions, erected temples, stele, statues, dug canals, and commissioned temple gifts. Gudea's relative obscurity in later tradition, however, may mean that Gudea was but one of a number of dynasts acting as he did between the Akkadian Empire and the rise of the Ur III state. His reign, if as productive as sources suggest, clarifies how Amorites and other foreigners might have seen opportunities for social and political ascent within Sumerian society in the late third millennium.

It is through a recognition of the scope of the effects of aridification from 2200 BC on that we are able to consider the social and economic effects it had upon societies from the Persian Gulf to Egypt. Thus, it may be unsurprising to identify evidence for the role that foreign groups such as Amorites played as mercenaries whether to the kings of the Ur III state (2112–2004 BC) or among the warring nomarchs of Egypt during the First Intermediate Period (2190–1991 BC). Although Egyptian sources are largely relegated to icono-graphic representations of Asiatics, who through a process of elimination can likely be identified as Amorites, among Ur III sources Amorites were the most conspicuous of actors. As part of the state's royal body guard, their activities were carefully monitored, and attention was paid to tracking these individuals in all their dealings in and out of the state. In this sense, however, they were not alone, and groups of Elamites and even Gutians are similarly marked in documentation. Still, as in Egypt, also in Mesopotamia, mercenary activity was not the only possible employ for recent immigrants and foreigners. Besides those whose integration through family ties made them all but invisible, as

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[3] Richardson 2015.

should be expected, Amorites, whether new immigrants or not, appear to have occupied a range of occupations within their host communities, from pastoralists to merchants and guides.

Despite the regular emphasis that Amorites receive among historical discussions of the late third millennium, they constituted a relative minority of southern Mesopotamia's population in the years that followed. This assessment is certainly complicated partly by the optics of naming conventions, where only a minority of those we identify as Amorites based on their designations in texts actually bore Amorite names. Yet inasmuch as we may wish to emphasize language as a key element of Amorite identity, throwing the entire endeavor of the discussion of identity into the laps of cuneiform specialists, the evidence demands the engagement of other approaches to account for Amorites and their social integration in the late third millennium. In this regard, affiliations of individuals, irrespective of the linguistics of their names, with groups, notably Amorite tribes as well as the regions with which they are associated, permit another means of identifying them as Amorite. It is by means of such real-world correlations that we may consider intramural residential burial practices, for example, among traditions that widely reflect the emphasis placed on the maintenance of family identity during the transition between the third and second millennia. That said, late third-millennium sources from Mesopotamia expose the challenges in qualifying Amorite identity following what were invariably different episodes of migration, intermarriage, and continued relocation in the century and a half after the fall of the Akkadian Empire. Amorite identity remained under construction among Amorite diaspora communities as relocations continued in the face of new opportunities.

Such a context at the end of the Ur III compels us to reconsider our monolithic treatments of Amorite identity in the late third millennium. Evidently, under social, economic, and political pressures communities identified broadly as Amorite were developing increasingly regional facies. Thus, the constellation of behaviors that might be associated with Amorite identity was mutating under the pressure of local cultural influences, whether in southern Mesopotamia, the Levant, or Egypt. The challenge then is to identify the traditions that may be identified with Amorite communities, where these traditions originated, and to articulate why these particular traditions persisted. Owing to the fairly extensive exploration of Mari and Ur, we may argue that in addition to residential burials, the direct-axis temple *in antis* suggests the influences of western groups, likely Amorites, concerned with maintaining their own cultic traditions. Indeed, the foreignness of both of these traditions to southern Mesopotamia prior to the Ur III and the recognition of the prototypes of these practices in northern Mesopotamia and the northern Levant is likely to be the most direct evidence we will possess of such associations. Nevertheless, the argument is not without an explanation of the

movement of individuals in the decades preceding these changes, and it does not require invoking invasion-oriented hypotheses to explain the relatively sudden changes that appear to have transpired.

In such a reconstruction, the collapse of Ur, at least partly the result of military activity by Amorite groups, is largely ancillary to the discussion of Amorite identity in the south. Conspicuous claims of wall building, ostensibly against militant Amorite groups such as the Tidnum, actually distract from the fact that many Amorites already lived within this defensive perimeter, evidently as loyal subjects and servants of the Ur III state. The case of Naplanum of Larsa, for example, mostly faithfully serving Ur's state apparatus through local governance, is particularly emblematic. In many other cases, Amorites and other foreigners served as soldiers within various elements of Ur's military structure. Factionalism among Amorites, which it seems existed primarily along tribal lines, provides a basis for recognizing that Amorite groups not only did not act in concert, they may not even have shared the same political objectives or social aspirations. In this we see a gradual shift at the end of the Ur III toward the injection of political ambitions among aspiring, tribally affiliated figures. What was once a largely ethnic and economic identity by Ur III times represented a broad and diverse social group in Sumerian society that now increasingly pursued political objectives as opportunities emerged for military leaders among Amorite tribes and clans.

Unfortunately, west of Mari and across the Levant sources are veritably non-existent by which to tease out a comparable picture in the early ascent of Amorite groups. We rely therefore entirely on archaeological sources and must point to the remarkable affinity among traditions between major centers such as Ebla, Mari, and Byblos late in the third millennium. Once again, the monuments of such endeavors center on the planning of towns, their fortifications, temples, palatial architecture, and some evidence for royal burial crypts, which arguably, collectively represent the increasing influences of the customs and practices of communities now home to many displaced Amorites. Of course, owing to the evident relationships that previously existed between many of these centers and the displaced communities of the steppe, the relative invisibility is not particularly surprising. Unfortunately, owing to the nature of the evidence from the southern Levant, burial customs and ceramics have been the primary focal points of Levantine research on the EB IV.

These circumstances changed during the early MBA when intensive development of settlement in the southern Levant occurred against a largely depopulated landscape. Although much has been written on the Early Bronze IV in Canaan, a broad comparative perspective highlights its relative insignificance within discussions of Amorite identity in the late third millennium. As observed in Chapter 3, the entire population of EB IV Canaan may

have been little more than that of Ur III Umma in southern Mesopotamia. Even if Canaan's population were two or three times greater than this, its relationship to the more densely settled parts of the northern Levant and Mesopotamia, where the bulk of populations centers were located, exposes its remarkably low population density. What Canaan offers, instead, are traces of persistent traditions associated with Amorite communities of the northern Levant and northern Mesopotamia in the late third millennium, despite its low number of inhabitants, revealing that it continued to be in communication with neighboring regions while local third-millennium traditions persisted. However, the state of its general decline from the mid-third millennium following the collapse of urbanism meant that, for all intents and purposes, Canaan represented a frontier or borderland largely open to renewed extensification of settlement and economic development once trade resumed between Egypt, Canaan, and the northern Levant in the early second millennium.

MILITARY POWER

The century after the fall of Ur was an age of opportunity for aspiring political elites throughout Mesopotamia. While Ur's successor state, Isin, controlled much of Babylonia during the twentieth century, its decline paved the way for Larsa's independence and its own political ascent under Amorite rule as well as that of neighboring states, some of which played host to growing Amorite factions. A not dissimilar set of affairs witnessed the rise of Amorite elites and their states in the west, evidently in the wake of Egyptian MK intervention. However, it is axiomatic that political power cannot be maintained without economic power, and economies are situated within social settings. As such, for the early second millennium it is impossible to separate the political ascendance of Amorite rule across the Near East, much less the maintenance of this power, from its socioeconomic and cultural milieu. Within the sphere of long-distance encounters between Amorite states and through the participation of their constituencies, an elite social identity associated with these states began to take shape in the early MBA (ca. 2000–1900 BC; see Chapter 4). Particular elements, comprising a constellation of practices and customs circumscribed an emergent *oikoumene*. Although this *oikoumene* was widely embraced, individual customs were selectively appropriated and these appropriations expose the cultural institutions that lay behind the emergence of physical expressions of these shared traditions in an Amorite koine by the early eighteenth century BC.

Although our textual sources are uneven at the start of the second millennium from Egypt to Mesopotamia, archaeological and textual sources reveal that Amorite communities were established in southern Mesopotamia, the

Levant, and the Egyptian Delta during the early MBA. In southern Mesopotamia, this appears to have often assumed the form of enclaves of Amorite tribes settling within or adjacent to existing towns, as was the case for Sippar-Amnanum and Sippar-Yaḫrurum around Sippar. However, a variety of other placenames reveal tribal affiliations and settlements whose names are usually identified as Amorite, as discussed in Chapter 2. Although we may triangulate the foundation of such communities not later than the early stages of the early MBA, precisely when such communities were founded remains a question for further consideration. Many communities, as around Larsa where the tribe of Yamutbalum was located, may date to the Ur III.

Farther to the north, as around Eshnunna in the Diyala, encounters with Amorite tribes included occasional raids and reprisals. This military action, alongside the role played by Amorite military figures among Babylonian centers during the decline of the Ur III state, expose an increasingly political dimension to the collective action of Amorite tribes. While the exact goals of these actions are not always discernible, a return of rainfall sufficient for pastoralism and rainfed agriculture across the zone of uncertainty – more than 200 mm per annum – by ca. 1900 BC appears to have precipitated efforts by the region's inhabitants, particularly among Amorite tribes, to stake claims on this reopened frontier, contributing to the coalescence of military-political factions. Unfortunately, the start of this process during the late Shakkanakku Period at Mari precedes the documentation provided by the Mari letters, shrouding the earliest phase of this process in darkness. Yet the continued competition over the region during the late twentieth and early nineteenth centuries by the kings of Mari, Yamḫad, Assyria, and Ekallatum reveals the later stages of a quest for control of this vast and, once again, productive steppe land.

Owing to the limits of documentation for northern Mesopotamia during the early second millennium, our reconstructions of the role played by increasingly active Amorite groups must rely largely on onomastic data. In southern Mesopotamia, these data reveal that Amorites were a true minority – as little as 10 percent of the local population – living alongside the region's earlier inhabitants and a number of foreign elements, including Subareans/Hurrians, Elamites, Gutians, and even Kassites by the end of the period. Farther upstream, at Mari, Amorites comprised a substantially larger percentage of the population, which by onomastic evidence appear to have constituted roughly 50 percent of the population. These numbers go a long way toward explaining why aspects of the cultural record of Mari and its proximity play an important role in identifying a range of Amorite cultural traditions that, if they were not more widely shared by Amorite communities in other areas, certainly reveal one face of Amorite culture.

Onomastic data are also crucial to our reconstructions of political power in the Levant, where the Execration Texts from Egypt play a vital role in

identifying Amorite rulers by name among a wide range of newly established towns, concentrated predominantly along Canaan's coastal plain and lowland valleys. While discussion of these texts often has been obsessed with inferences of the social structure of the groups to which these rulers belonged, usually inferring their tribal structure and thus identifying their rulers as chiefs, the Egyptian term for ruler in these texts permits no such qualifications. Although we can infer that similar social structures, namely tribal affiliations, served as the source of political power of these individuals, we do so entirely by analogy to the documentation from Mesopotamia.

Based on the assignment of the Execration Texts to a period between the reigns of Amenemhet I to Amenemhet II (1991–1895 BC), we are compelled to place the processes behind the emergence of Amorite rule in the Levant early in the twentieth century BC. The context for these processes were largely military and mercantile. The military component was not, however, an invasion by Amorite hordes as prevailed among mid-twentieth century scholarship. Rather, a sustained period of military intervention by MK rulers, largely during the very period covered by the Execration Texts, exposes a context ripe for secondary state formation, particularly among nascent Canaanite communities along the major trade routes through the region. This period is reflected by sites of the earliest phases of the Middle Bronze I (ca. 2000–1900 BC) during which small, largely Amorite mercantile enclaves along both maritime and overland routes in the coastal plain and inland valleys were gradually forced into defensive positions, as reflected by the introduction of northern styles of fortifications.

While a seeming abatement in military intervention appears to have occurred toward the end of the twentieth century BC, there was, however, little reason for an abandonment of these defensive structures after 1900 BC. Furthermore, these fortification systems served to legitimate emergent rulers, as they did in Mesopotamia. The decline in intervention and a return of trade between Egypt and the Levant, along with a return to the exploitation of the zone of uncertainty also likely contributed to the rapid growth of these networks and the settlement patterns surrounding these communities. The growth of secondary settlements around the initial foundations may be inferred from the settlement data available and is owed both to the subsistence require- ments of these growing communities and efforts at the increasing economic exploitation of their hinterlands for the production of exports such as wine and oil. Such appear to have been the circumstances behind the growth of Ashkelon, for instance, the largest MB I polity in Canaan, where we know the names of three of its early Amorite rulers. Added to the concerns Egypt posed during the MK, long-distance exchanges, which almost certainly engaged distant powers from Mesopotamia, brought a degree of uncertainty that warranted the continued protection of Canaan's growing enclaves by

means of the earthen fortifications erected earlier. A veritable absence of evidence for the destruction of Canaanite sites during this period and a sustained growth of settlement in the region that followed in the second half of the MBA appear to reveal the utility of this approach.

While narratives emphasizing the ruralization of Canaan's landscape that center on indigenous explanations have sought to correct for largely unqualified mid-twentieth century hypotheses regarding Amorite incursions, these explanations fall short in addressing the orientation or chronological evolution of settlement in Canaan during the early MBA. This is not to say, however, that Canaan's small population did not play a role in the emerging settlement pattern at the start of the second millennium. While there is no reason to doubt that it did, the clearest evidence for the contribution of the local population appears restricted to a very limited number of mixed burials that contain assemblages featuring both EB IV and MB I remains, thus straddling this transition. The presence of small sites, such as Tell el-Hayyat, do not, in and of themselves, constitute a justification for qualifying the settlement pattern as one with a significant indigenous rural component. Furthermore, the presence of typically urban monumental features such as the direct-axis temples at Hayyat and Kitan argue for their integration into the formal cultic landscape witnessed at large contemporaneous sites nearby, such as Pella in this case. Staples of urban life were therefore making their way into the countryside, most likely through political institutions. Traditional interpretations of such small sites as belonging to a broader polity or networks of settlement are perfectly suited to the socioeconomic conditions of the early MBA. Indeed, the parallels in architecture between small and large sites alike, as well as the requirements of supporting such formal complexes, further warrant viewing them as dependent settlements. There are insufficient archaeological data thus far to reify a false dichotomy between urban and rural contexts during this period, as asserted in the indigenous-origins hypothesis.

The extremely small population of Canaan at the close of the third millennium, coupled with the very limited growth that was typical for ancient populations, all but demand the identification of exogenous factors in the increase of Canaan's population during the early second millennium. The picture that emerges for early MBA settlement in the Levant is, therefore, one strongly driven by the effects of integration within networks of long-distance trade. Although the limits of archaeological exposures of the earliest phases of the MB I do not yet permit us a view of the arrival of these outsiders, the evidence for Asiatics (ꜥꜣmw), qualified socially as Amorites, at Avaris in the eastern Delta and associated with both maritime and overland trade, and their connections with Byblos and the northern Levant, reveal two ends of a mercantile corridor. Given the analogous corridor between Assur and Kanesh, it is warranted to seek to identify the intervening points along these

trade routes. Although Ebla may also have initially contributed to this trade, notably during the twentieth century, as suggested by references to its merchants in the OA documentation (and a conspicuous absence of references to Yamḫad), its role was likely supplanted after 1900 BC by nascent Amorite dynasties of Yamḫad and Qatna, accompanied by the emergence of Hazor in northern Canaan.

Within the political and economic context of the rise of Amorite factionalism in the early second millennium, it may come as little surprise that mercenary activity played a significant role in the economic livelihood of Amorite communities from the Persian Gulf to the Nile Valley. The risky security environment of the early second millennium, which actually had persisted since the collapse of Akkadian power, likely created a dire need for security services across the region. These could be provided by professionalized military elements as, for example, among Amorite, Elamite, and Sutean communities. Ur III sources and iconographic sources in Mesopotamia and Egypt, respectively, expose the role played by Amorites in prevailing conflicts and security services across the Near East in the closing centuries of the third millennium. While they do not appear to have wielded direct political power in these "foreign" contexts, they were active participants in military activity surrounding the rise of post–Ur III states and the reconquest of Egypt by the MK. As during the Akkadian Period, the hostilities around these events provided ample opportunities for acquiring military expertise and experience. Furthermore, members of Amorite mercenary communities ascended socially and politically through the formal recognition of their military service by means of the creation of new ranks, as seen in various titles, such as "chief" and "scribe of the Amorites," which appear in Mesopotamia and, as suggested in this work, also in Egypt at this time.

The ensuing military activity of Amorite groups, as well as that of Elamites, that appears during the Ur III supports this. No single state controlled the vast tracts once secured by the Akkadian Empire, and the abandonment of settlements across much of the Near East between 2200 and 1900 BC likely contributed to large, insecure territories that were still to be crossed by occasional caravan traffic and emissaries. Consequently, during the early MBA, before territorial states took root and laid claim to these areas, assuming responsibility for security through their territories, the security of caravan traffic fell principally to the caravaneers themselves. The Suteans, well known among the Mari correspondence, are excellent examples of one such group, who established themselves by providing guides and security detail to caravans, albeit known primarily from the late OB Period when states had laid claim to all but the smallest of patches of territory. Concerns with brigandage and banditry during the early MBA, as evident in the Kanesh correspondence, likely created a significant demand for the protection of caravans. There is little

reason to doubt that this would have been the case throughout much of the southern Levant as well at the start of the MBA.

It is within the context of such mercenary activity and potential warlordism, therefore, that already in the late third millennium a relatively distinct and consistent expression of male burials, of the so-called warrior burial type, appeared. During the early second millennium these individual male burials were outfitted with the instruments of hand-to-hand combat, principally the ax, dagger, and spear, in various combinations. While they may expose aspects of status marking by males, particularly when the weapons are decorated or made from gold or silver, there is remarkably little differentiation among most of these burials. Furthermore, they often occur within burial grounds of multiple burials of this type, usually with no evident status differentiation, reasonably permitting us to consider such practices as marks of socioeconomic solidarity. What is remarkable perhaps, and infrequently the focus of discussion, is that the men are buried in isolation, and it is difficult, if not impossible, in most cases to suggest the association of these individuals with the burial of any kin or extended family, except insofar as they are rarely placed within larger burial caves. This is even clearer given the emphasis placed on residential funerary chambers that suggest a particular concern with the maintenance of family identity during this period. Why should these burials so markedly contrast with a widely emerging practice? They do so because they represent largely mobile communities whose connections or homes are likely located elsewhere. Like the earliest generation of Assyrian merchants, perhaps, they partly viewed themselves as outsiders to the communities in which they were buried. While this hypothesis warrants further testing, the crucial historical context of these burials, their widespread diffusion throughout the Near East, and the advent of regular, long-distance exchange in the early third millennium support this interpretation.

During the second half of the third millennium and into the early second millennium, the Egyptian term ꜥꜣmw was most frequently applied to Asiatic groups settled in Egypt and encountered in the Levant, as in the Execration Texts. As discussed in Chapter 4, the cultural affiliations of inhabitants to whom such a term would have applied during the MK were, evidently, primarily of Amorite cultural affiliation, judging from well-preserved onomastic evidence, but also from the Levantine Amorite associations of many archaeological features encountered at sites such as Avaris and Mashkuta. Indeed, despite the challenges posed by determining the nature of the linguistic transfer of ꜥꜣmw into Egyptian, if this is what actually occurred, it has been suggested on more than one occasion that it may reflect the Amorite term ꜥ/ḫammu, which may similarly have informed later Northwest Semitic vocabulary if it is preserved, for instance, in the Hebrew term ꜥam, referring to a "people."

Although military and civil service played a significant role in the expansion of Amorite political power in Mesopotamia, it only served as a basis for its foundation. The endurance of Amorite political hegemony rested, however, on successful efforts to demonstrate their legitimacy. In the context of peer-polity interaction in the early MBA, patronage of various types of endeavors played a crucial role in establishing the legitimacy of Amorite dynasties. Because war making, the building of fortifications and temples, the bestowal of gifts to temples, and the erection of monuments were well-established traditions at the start of the second millennium in Mesopotamia, they were easily appropriated by early Amorite rulers. However, a unique development in this process was an increasingly formalized and consistent approach to these endeavors that almost certainly resulted from the exchange of personnel across vast territories in an atmosphere of competitive emulation. Temples increasingly adhered to the direct-axis plan, with its long associations with northern Mesopotamia and the Levant, while, with seemingly similar origins, royal hypogea adapted residential burials to the palace. Fortifications likewise assumed a highly regularized approach from Mesopotamia to the Levant.

Because of the relationship between trade and political power, royal patronage of mercantile endeavors was perhaps the greatest tool employed by Amorite rulers in their quest for legitimacy during the early MBA. Due to the limits of documentation, however, it is unsurprising that we possess little explicit information on an institution that played such a crucial role in cultural exchange. Even so, when sources do exist, as in the cases of the OA colonies and the Mari letters, they demonstrate that long-distance exchange required the sanction and backing of the rulers of city-states. This is likely not due to financial needs since these endeavors could be backed by wealthy families as in the Assur-Kanesh network, and like those that also played a role in Ur III entrepreneurship. Rather, the state's input was required because, in the environment of intense competition after the Ur III, exchange was viewed as a deeply, if not inherently, political activity. Strategic goals often accompanied trade endeavors, which transcended simple profit making. Consequently, restrictions were established, which while seeking to limit losses to competing groups, sought to create and maintain spheres of influence that effected impediments, if not outright boundaries, to the types of social interactions expected for direct trade between groups. Although we cannot be certain how many aspects of the OA trade were common to early MBA trade in general, the scale, duration, and intensity of that trade provide useful insights into the operations and outcomes that OB *karū* embodied.

Although potential clues are afforded from early MBA contexts at Avaris concerning the intermarriage of Amorite males to non-Amorite women and the possibility that they established residences within the Amorite enclave there, the evidence for such processes at Kanesh is clearer owing to the ample

OA documentation. The unequivocal evidence for intermarriage by foreign merchants residing at Kanesh long term exposes a major vector for the transmission of cultural traditions, which can reasonably be inferred for the social landscape of Amorite relations from Avaris to Dilmun. Hybrid expressions of material culture, to say nothing of the appearance of traditions identified with Amorite communities within the core of the Fertile Crescent, point to social interactions more enduring than those associated with a ship's captain in a port who could expeditiously turn a ship around with a new load of cargo. As the Old Assyrian documentation reveals, merchants in these trade networks were involved in the procurement, insurance, security, transport of, and payment for goods, as well as their sale, marketing, distribution and delivery. In their enduring roles within the different regions in which they operated it is of little surprise that they were well positioned to serve the state as ambassadors and even spies. However, marriage may have had an ameliorating effect on their efforts, notably as their spouses, children and extended kin represented, to one extent or another, conflicts of interest. Indeed, that these types of marriage arrangements only emerged among a second generation of Assyrian merchants suggests that such arrangements were never intended and were certainly not in line with the state's primary interests. They were a concession and an acknowledgment of the realities of long-term service by merchants abroad.

If such observations are applied to Amorite merchant communities, we understand what is perhaps the subtlest means by which the cultural influence of Amorite communities was extended across such a vast region during the early MBA and, furthermore, how these connections cultivated an *oikoumene*. It was the household (*oikos*), as the term connotes, and its entangled relationships resulting from local economic activity and intermarriage that functioned as a primary conduit for the construction and continual negotiation of a distinct Amorite social identity and, eventually, its continued dissemination. This only laid the groundwork, however, for the next stage in the evolution of Amorite identity, namely competition and emulation among elites who would often explicitly lay claim to an Amorite identity.

POLITICAL HEGEMONY

By the end of the nineteenth century, Amorite dynasties were established across the breadth of the Fertile Crescent to such an extent that the ensuing late MBA (ca. 1800–1550 BC) can arguably be identified as the "Age of Amorites" (see Chapter 5). Others have referred to the interactions of this period as embodying an Amorite *oikoumene*, emphasizing the nature and mechanics of these interactions that drew upon but reshaped southern Mesopotamian traditions. Among these traditions were those associated with

kingship, but also scribalism that adopted the use of OB as the lingua franca of correspondence, as well as spoken language, despite some evidence for the persistence of spoken Amorite. Legal traditions also appear with greater frequency, and despite the limitations of our sources, remarkably consistent legal language appears from southern Mesopotamia to Canaan, along with the promulgation of a consistent tripartite social order below that of the royal household, featuring free persons, a dependent class, and slaves or servants. Likewise, in cultic practices evidence for omen traditions suggest a similar adherence to particular practices, if less often to reverence for a limited set of deities, such as Ḥ/Adad(u), I/Ashtar(tu), and Shamash, alongside locally persistent gods. The eponymous god Martu, who was not evidently worshiped by Amorites, was introduced to the Mesopotamian pantheon during the early second millennium in an evident effort to incorporate Amorites within the framework of older Mesopotamian conceptions of cult.

Sometimes expressed through "genealogical charters," kings such as Hammurapi of Babylon began to make explicit efforts to integrate Amorite identity into their heritage, also through the creation and use of official titles like "king of Amorite lands." The embracing of traditions, notably long-lived literary and historical traditions, also served the purpose of legitimizing Amorite rulers, as most evident in Mesopotamia. In this process the figures of Gilgamesh and Sargon loomed exceedingly large, serving as archetypes for OB kingship, while also exposing what may have been a critique of the abuses of kingship that was situated within the scribal schools of wealthy elites, most of whom we can safely conclude were probably not Amorite, since only around 10 percent were during the preceding period.

The most effective, if seemingly subconscious, means of establishing Amorite royal legitimacy was, however, through monuments and highly conspicuous traditional undertakings, which left their imprint upon the cultural and physical landscapes. Owing to their highly conspicuous and public nature, they were also easily appropriated by distant rulers with whose courts they were in constant communication. Although the prevalence of dynastic claims to Amorite identity may suffice as a justification for the cultivation of an *oikoumene* that drew heavily upon southern Mesopotamian traditions, a range of monuments across Amorite-ruled territories expose the physical detritus of these interactions that is well-suited to archaeological study. Urban planning, fortification construction, temple architecture, palace architecture and décor, burial customs, stelae, and sealing traditions among others, appear in an impressively consistent fashion across different polities, as the highly visible monuments of the period. Together they suggest the existence of a cultural koine that resulted from the institutional interactions patronized by Amorite rulers and an even wider group of elites. Like aspects of the *oikoumene*, these traditions were not invented by Amorites, but rather appropriated by Amorite

elites, first by rulers of the early OB Period and gradually by wider retinues of elites and their dependents throughout the late MBA (see Chapter 5).

The late MBA is characterized by extensive mobility throughout the social hierarchy associated with a range of institutions. Palaces exchanged personnel between courts among a wide range of craft specialists but also continued their long-range economic endeavors with the aid of *tamkārū*. These affected the length and breadth of trades, particularly among urban centers, bringing the highly visible aspects of these communities into more frequent and intensive contact; these were the very real legs that bore traditions across the expanse of the Near East in this period. Individuals also participated in land tenure among foreign states that resulted in the creation of what may have been the first truly cosmopolitan elite, contributing to a cultural exchange usually witnessed only within imperial contexts, as during the Late Bronze Age and throughout the early first millennium BC. As a result, discontiguous states emerged, which defy traditional efforts to portray them as inkblots on maps, further entangling the region's communities.

One of the most significant contributions to mobility and related cultural exchanges in this period were the wars waged by kings against neighboring rulers and the alliances formed to counter territorial ambitions. These may have contributed most to the wide-ranging contacts that included even the lowest rungs of the social ladder. These engagements often placed the conscripted populace from across an entire region in direct contact with similarly conscripted individuals from communities hundreds of kilometers away with an at-times-astonishing regularity, as evidenced in the Mari letters, and for months at a time. Among the primary justifications for warfare during this period was the underlying quest for legitimacy in the mold of Akkadian rulers, often through competitive emulation, perhaps in emulation of Ur III rulers, who were incessantly on campaign.[4] Warfare, such as the royally-sponsored but more importantly, royally-secured, trade endeavors, was a central element of the peer-polity interactions that defined this age of competing states.[5]

By the late MBA, institutional interactions typical to warfare, trade, palatial exchanges, and land tenure encouraged the repeated appropriation, emulation, and adaptation of traditions across a wide geographic region by a broad spectrum of social classes, including non-elites. The nature of the visible monuments of the age – palaces, cylinder seals, murals, temples, fortifications, and burials – meant that by the eighteenth century BC almost no part of life or any social class was unaffected by these encounters. Non-elites were evidently familiar with the world beyond the boundaries of their own communities in a

[4] Schwartz 2013a: 4–7.
[5] Renfrew 1986.

radically new way. Massive fortification systems and towering temple and palatial complexes, as well as stelae – whether bearing the kingdom's laws or the king's accomplishments – were conspicuous to the eyes of dependents and enslaved people, just as the walls, churches, palaces, and public inscriptions of Renaissance Florence were visible to the city's peasants. The visual landscape of power in the Amorite world was highly charged with symbols of its dynasties, often mimicking age-old and revered Mesopotamian traditions. The traditions therefore inscribed themselves on much of the dependent class, whose frequent emulation of elites contributed to an even wider adoption of this koine and related customs.

The Amorite koine was not simply a form of mimicry, however. It was a continually renewed cultural form resulting from the persistent and intensive interactions of communities from the Persian Gulf to the Nile River delta. For this reason, its cultural manifestation varied in different regions, while drawing upon an array of familiar and well-established traditions. These differences expose how new constellations of the Amorite koine resulted from selective appropriation and adaptation of these traditions among different communities. Rule by Amorite dynasties rested on a precarious balance between self-aggrandizement and accommodation of the constituencies over which they ruled. While such accommodation is not easy to identify superficially, hints of such efforts may be witnessed in variations in monument construction. Temple architecture reveals variations on the theme of the direct-axis temple *in antis* tradition, for example. Monumental stelae convey a variety of messages and range from displays of legal traditions to royal apologia and examples of aniconic variants in the Levant, presuming that the analogous contexts of these stelae suggest comparable functions, while exhibiting significantly less investment in skilled craftwork. Similarly, mural styles and their execution within palaces and elite residences reveal the effect of local factors such as the availability of craftspersons from particular regions and the styles that accompanied such personnel.

The resulting picture makes it possible to speak, on the one hand, of the existence of distinct, regional Amorite identities and cultures emerging in the context of tribal communities whose identities were shaped by local traditions while, on the other hand, to identify a broader, shared Amorite social identity that transcended geographic and political boundaries. The latter is exhibited by the adoption of a greater number of traditions associated with the Amorite koine and usually included the adoption of Amorite naming conventions. To what extent such individuals viewed themselves as members of a common descent is unclear, though the appearance of the god Martu might suggest that others indeed viewed Amorite groups as sharing this, as much as some genealogies also advanced such an ideology. As such, by the eighteenth century BC, it is neither accurate, nor adequate, to speak of Amorite identity as an ethnic

label. Rather, it was an expression of solidarity, sometimes political, sometimes economic, sometimes ritual and ideological, but always the product of a willingness to appropriate or adapt customs encountered through the intensive social interactions that defined the period.

THE ECLIPSE OF SOCIAL POWER

The sack of Babylon in 1595 BC that is traditionally identified as the end of the OB Period was likely the watershed moment in the decline of the "Age of Amorites." Its decline did not depend, however, upon this singular event. Rather, this event constituted a coup de grace delivered to Amorite political hegemony from the northern Levant to southern Mesopotamia. Babylon's fall, for example, followed upon the gradual integration of Kassites – who ruled in the succeeding period – in Babylonian society, first as mercenaries, and ultimately as part of a resettlement mechanism in war-ravaged southern Mesopotamia.[6] The scenario is, therefore, not unlike the protracted processes that had previously contributed to the integration of Amorites into Mesopotamian society.[7] The political dissolution of the brotherhood of Amorite states across the northern Fertile Crescent, particularly in the context of the sustained threats posed by the expansion of the Hittite and Hurrian states, disrupted the dynastic regimes and social networks that had cultivated and sustained the Amorite age. The contemporaneous decline of Amorite rule in Mesopotamia was followed within decades by the decline of Amorite rule in the eastern Nile Delta, which followed the ousting of the so-called Hyksos dynasty ruling Avaris, which I have argued is almost certainly of an Amorite social identity. In the third quarter of the sixteenth century BC, a new dynasty of pharaohs would reassert Egyptian control over the Delta and consequently reunite Egypt, bringing with it a unified policy of centralized control that would limit foreign influence and seek to challenge the hegemony of Levantine Amorite states.

As it had been the last source of social power to be obtained, Amorite political power was the most conspicuous, built as it was on a foundation of economic and military power. Its disruption at the end of the MBA clearly exposes the role that Levantine states and their interactions had played in the cultivation of a regional Amorite identity. One might view this process as the balkanization of the Amorite Crescent. This was largely the product of the emerging empires of Egypt, Hatti, and Mitanni, each of which began chipping away at the region's many Amorite-ruled states. A direct result of the loss of political power was the loss of Amorite royal patronage of a wide array

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[6] Kuhrt 1995: 332–34.
[7] Van Koppen 2007: 213–17.

of endeavors. Thus, monuments do not again share nearly such a consistent physical expression across this wide region except perhaps until the influence of Iron Age empires nearly a millennium later. The breakdown in this network of Amorite states also disrupted economic connections, at least sufficiently to assure that political power was not resurrected by access to long-distance mercantile networks, which now might require that the territories of at least three empires be crossed to reach similar markets. While long-distance trade did not cease, the monopoly of routes now fell under the sway of imperial administrations, which benefited from tributes imposed upon local vassals. Consequently, a decline in economic power further eroded political power that, in turn, eroded military power. That former Amorite states (among others) could find themselves on opposite sides of the lines dividing these emergent empires ensured a decline and eventual breakdown in the circulation of palace personnel and elites that had characterized the MBA. The focus of social power gradually shifted to imperial agents who could direct the movement of personnel, goods, and, when necessary, the application of military power.

As in earlier episodes, different regional experiences shaped distinct trajectories in the reception of Amorite traditions in the centuries after the MBA. During the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550–1100 BC), when Amorite identities persisted, they increasingly represented hybrid traditions. They took part, on the one hand, in a legacy of traditions that originated in the social world of the Amorites. On the other hand, they were increasingly subjected to shaping by local traditions as well as the traditions of the empires that ruled them. The best documented of such examples to date is Ugarit. This is evident, for example, in the invocation of ancestral Amorite names, urban entry rituals for deities, donkey sacrifice, rites honoring deceased royalty and, likely, divination.[8] Amorite traditions also appear to have shaped many aspects of its urban monuments.[9] Hurrian and Hittite traditions represent the other conspicuous traditions that mingled with these from the end of the MBA on. Outside of Ugarit, which effectively was a surviving Amorite state, the persistence of the legacy of Amorite political power may be illustrated by the emergence of the LBA state of Amurru that is extensively referenced in the Amarna Letters of the mid-fourteenth century BC.[10] Yet its direct relationship to earlier Amorite traditions is beyond our means of investigation.

In light of the trajectory of the decline of Amorite social identity during the LBA, it is curious that the cultural legacy of Amorites came to be known, as it was, to Iron Age communities. Nevertheless, the Assyrian King List from

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[8] Pardee 2002: 69–72, 82, 87, 123–24, 230.
[9] Buck 2020.
[10] Singer 1991.

the Neo-Assyrian Period, as discussed in Chapter 1, preserves such a connection well into the first millennium. Were such traditions more widely maintained in the first millennium such that the Judean biblical traditions are reflective of broader cultural memories, or were these somehow derivative of Assyrian traditions? The pervasive nature of Amorite traditions support the likelihood that the former was true. Consequently, whatever nominal legacy Amorite identity enjoyed in the first millennium, it was probably a product of the pervasive influences of Amorite social identity during the second half of the MBA.

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